ITALY FROM WITHIN

Richard G. Massock

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Italy from Within

by

Richard G. Massock

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SET UP BY BROWN BROTHERS LINOTYPERS
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Foreword

Some of this the writer witnessed or experienced in the ten years that he was a correspondent in the Foreign Service of The Associated Press. Part of it he heard from the trusted friends that every newspaperman must have. Some of it is the fruit of research in the writings of others.

The bibliography of Fascism is too extensive for publication here. Helpful are *The Fascist Government of Italy*, by Herbert W. Schneider; *Fascist Rule in Italy*, by Vera Michele Dean; *Mussolini's Italy*, by Herman Finer; *What Next O Duce?* by Beatrice Baskerville, to mention only a few of the many excellent books.

This does not pretend to be a definitive review of the history of Fascist Italy, or even of the shifting policies of Mussolini. It is intended to help the reader understand what has happened to Italy under Mussolini's dictatorship and what may happen within the country before the last bomb is dropped in World War II.

For that reason, a conscious effort was made to keep it factual and objective. In this connection, special appreciation goes to Charles A. Livingood, former United States commercial attaché at Rome, for invaluable background information on Italian economy.

In the mention of Italians, it has unfortunately been necessary to omit many names in order to spare the individuals from persecution by the police. Some Italian acquaintances of the writer already have been interned. None of them is mentioned in this book. Some diplomatic sources of information remain anonymous because of no wish to embarrass them in their careers.

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Italy from Within

I

Prologue

The poet and the journalist shifted their chairs a bit to make another place at their small table and beckoned to me as I entered the crowded restaurant near the Piazza di Spagna.

Usually I found them at the same table at about the same midday hour. They lunched together because, the writing of verse paying even less under Fascism than it does under democracy, the poet collaborated with the newspaperman in the fabrication of movie scenarios for the Italian Hollywood, Cine Cittá. The journalist confided to me that he was a litterateur of the films because he got tired of grinding out pieces for his paper on Albion's perfidy and the warmongering plutocracy of the United States. For the films he could, at least, invent his own fictions, after he was done with rewriting those of the government propaganda mill for his newspaper.

They were, in brief, young intellectuals, educated in the university. They were not, therefore, typical perhaps of the Italian nation as a whole, but they were the last Italians with whom I talked before Mussolini declared war on the United States.

It was about one o'clock when I went to the restaurant for lunch. I had no hunger for the standardized three courses of vegetable soup, fish, rabbit, or brains, and fruit. Our communications had been suspended the afternoon before, so that we no longer could send dispatches to the outside world. I had plenty of time to contemplate an imminent alteration in my status from that of a duly accredited foreign correspondent to that of an enemy alien. It was a depressing subject to think

about. I wondered what effect the change would have in the attitude of my Italian acquaintances.

Apparently there was no animosity on the part of Aldo, the poet, and Gino, the newspaperman. I took the proffered place at their table.

"Are you going over to the Piazza Venezia to hear the Duce?" Gino asked.

"Yes," I replied, "there's nothing else to do."

"How does it feel to be involved in a historic event?"

"I don't feel anything but a vast amount of futility. I'll be glad when it's over and I can get out of this country and go some place where I can do some real work for a change."

"Has the censorship been bad for you fellows?"

"What do you think?"

"I know. It's a shame. And now we add a new enemy to the list. Italy for the first time will be at war with America."

"What do the Italians think of it?" I asked.

"They hate to think about it. You've lived here since before the war. You know what their feelings are."

"But what about the Fascists?"

He laughed. "We are all Fascists. Seriously, nobody knows how many are really Fascists and believe the propaganda. The spy system is trying to check up. Everybody in our office has somebody watching him. One has to be careful, because one does not know who is watching him.

"I hope," he added, "that man at the next table will not report me."

I looked and saw a man staring at us curiously, his attention perhaps attracted by my accent; then he turned back to his eating, seemingly without further interest in us. I had finished the soup, which was all I wanted.

"I am leaving," I said. "Be careful. Addio."

"Addio," said the poet, and the newspaperman added almost inaudibly, "Tenga duro, hold fast."

I paid the check, left the restaurant, and walked slowly toward the scene where history was to be made.

In the great Roman square facing the crenelated imitation of a Venetian palace, the crowd stirred restlessly. It was three o'clock. None of the twenty thousand men and women assembled in the big piazza had been told why they were there. Each knew only that a messenger in Fascist uniform early that morning had left a pink card at his home. The printed card ordered him to be at his *fascio*, neighborhood party headquarters, at 12:45. But all suspected the purpose of the summons. They had received many such cards in the past. So they had gone dutifully to the fascio and joined a column for the familiar march to the spot where the Duce of Fascism customarily let his people know what new decision he had reached.

It was a fateful afternoon, they knew. Japanese air bombers had attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor four days earlier. Italy, with Germany, was allied with the aggressor in a three-power pact that pledged their aid of one another in war. It was not uncertainty as to what they would hear that brought the Romans to the Piazza Venezia. They turned out because failure to obey the summons without a good excuse might mean arrest.

The tall windows of the Palazzo Venezia opened. Benito Mussolini stepped to the balcony, two stories above the heads of the crowd. His short, peasant's body wore the black tunic, gray breeches, and black leather boots of the Leader of Fascist Italy. He scowled under a black cap with the golden eagle emblem of the Roman Empire. Almost simultaneously with the dictator's appearance, two other figures stepped to the balcony. One wore the navy-blue uniform of Adolf Hitler's civil service. The other was dressed in the frock coat, gray-striped trousers, and silk hat which form the diplomatic uniform of

the Japanese. The crowd gave its customary triple cheer of "Duce, Duce, Duce," promptly, but without fervor.

Flanked by the German and Japanese ambassadors, Mussolini jerked his right arm skyward in the Fascist salute. He spoke into a microphone, which carried through loud-speakers to the crowd in the square and over a nation-wide network to Italians everywhere these words:

"This is another day of solemn decision in Italy's history and of memorable events destined to give a new course to the history of continents.

"The powers of the pact of steel, Fascist Italy and National Socialist Germany, ever closely linked, participate from today on the side of heroic Japan against the United States of America.

"The Tri-partite Pact becomes a military alliance which draws around its colors 250,000,000 men determined to do all in order to win.

"Neither the Axis nor Japan wanted an extension of the conflict.

"One man, one man only, a real tyrannical democrat, through a series of infinite provocations, betraying with a supreme fraud the people of his country, wanted the war and had prepared for it day by day with diabolical obstinacy.

"The formidable blows that on the immense Pacific expanse have already been inflicted to American forces show how prepared are the soldiers of the Empire of the Rising Sun. I say to you, and you will understand, that it is a privilege to fight with them.

"Today, the Tri-partite Pact, with the plenitude of its forces and its moral and material resources, is a formidable instrument for the war and a certainty for victory.

"Tomorrow the Tri-partite Pact will become an instrument of just peace between the peoples.

"Italians! Once more arise and be worthy of this historical hour!

"We shall win."

He probably was right in saying the Axis did not want an extension of the war. While the Russians were holding the Germans at bay, the growing might of the United States was the greatest potential menace to the plans of the Rome and Berlin dictatorships. They wanted always to call the tune, to keep every country neutral and unprepared until they were ready to attack it. That made conquest easier.

As for Japan's reluctance to spread the war in the Pacific, that was more than dubious. Mussolini contradicted himself when he mentioned the preparedness of the Japanese. A contradiction of terms was his "tyrannical democrat." Few, undoubtedly, of Mussolini's hearers analyzed his words. Most of them probably were anxious only to drop the pretense of applauding him and go back to their own little affairs. They did not bother to think of what "tyranny" and "democracy" meant. But were they entirely heedless of the words the dictator had spoken?

As Mussolini spoke I leaned against a lamppost at the edge of the crowd, watching for reaction. It was all over in five minutes. On other occasions I had seen how Mussolini swayed his people with his dynamic, theatrical personality, his poses of the inherent actor, with chest thrown out and his bulbous chin pointed to the sky, his blunt, sometimes flamboyant phrases, delivered in a loud and hoarse voice. Men, and particularly women, had responded to the magnetism of the man for two decades. This open-air orator had a curious capacity for attracting something near to adoration with his vitality, his acting, his imaginative and sentimental rhetoric. I had seen a sort of sexual glow in the eyes of fascinated women while they listened to the oratory of this man, lacking in physical beauty. A friend once told me half the women in Italy were in love with him.

On December 11, 1941, the dictator's chest seemed deflated. His chin rested on the tight collar of his uniform blouse. His

bearing lacked swagger and fire. He who stood between the two representatives of Italy's new masters, the Hitler of Nazified Europe and the treacherous militarists of Japan, was not the Mussolini of old.

A youngish couple were in front of me. I watched for the woman's face to light up with Freudian rapture. I watched for the man to clap his hands and join the cheer which a group of students was trying to make spontaneous.

It didn't work. The couple, and others around them, watched and listened with solemn faces, devoid of emotion. Then with the same indifference, without enthusiasm, they walked away. Mussolini had lost his glamor.

The last time they had assembled there for a like announcement was on June 10, 1940. Then Mussolini told them that Italy was at war against Britain and France. Then the crowd cheered dutifully and lengthily, and university students, in their Fascist uniforms, paraded the streets, waving Italian flags and yelling. The dream of empire still pervaded them. Mussolini promised then to "break the chains" at British-held Gibraltar and the Suez, which held Italy in the Mediterranean, and to wrest from France the influence that Rome craved.

Eighteen months later Mussolini's speech was short. It was grim. The five-year-old East African Empire was lost to British arms. Nothing but a few miles of Alpine frontier had been obtained from German-conquered France. The British still held Gibraltar and Suez. Mussolini had humiliated his people with a defeat at the hands of a brave Greece, beaten only by German arms. The British, whom he had defied as a decadent people just eighteen months earlier, had defeated the Italians on their Libyan sands.

Now Mussolini was presenting them with the specter of a long war against the growing might of American as well as British arms. It was a war dictated by Tokio and Berlin. He asked the Italians, in effect, to hate the United States, or at least the democratically elected president, as they had been

urged to hate the British and the French after the economic sanctions of the Ethiopian war. They had never before been called upon to show hostility toward a land where millions of them in the past found opportunity and a better life. It was impossible for them to do it now.

As they looked at Mussolini, standing between Ambassador George von Mackensen and the Asiatic envoy, some may have remembered that Mussolini called the Germans "barbarians" in 1917 and referred to the Japanese as the "yellow peril" in 1934. Some may even have recalled that Mussolini, in the First World War, said: "It is for us a source of pride and satisfaction to be associated with twenty-three other nations in this war against Prussian militarism; but it must also be a satisfaction for the United States to fight side by side with a great and powerful England, which does not tremble beside the varying chances of war."

Italians' discontent at the inadequacy of their territorial gains after World War I, aggravated by the economic sanctions imposed on Italy at the League of Nations in 1935 in a futile attempt to halt the conquest of Ethiopia, had turned Italy against Great Britain and France. But hard feeling against the United States was another thing.

For months the Fascist-controlled, Nazi-inspired press raged against "Anglo-Saxon Judo-Democratic-plutocracy" and against "its high priest" Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was charged with "misleading his countrymen into war." The public, however, had long since been immune to the editorial exhortations of Fascist propagandists. For the average Italian is as cynical and realistic as Mussolini, who frankly flaunts those characteristics of Niccolo Machiavelli, the cunning Florentine who more than four hundred years ago propounded one political doctrine of Fascism—that a ruler may use any means, however unscrupulous, to maintain a central government.

Even Mussolini's Fascist followers, few though they might

now be, knew the Duce had no grievance against the United States, except that its president was prosecuting an undeclared war against Hitlerism, with which Fascism was inextricably allied.

War-weary, disillusioned, underfed, the great mass of Italians could share no fresh animosity with their self-imposed leader against a new and powerful foe. They still nursed their desire for access to raw materials with which to work or lands to which they might again emigrate. But the vicissitudes of three wars, in Ethiopia, Spain, and the world, already had dimmed their expectations. After eighteen months Italy was beaten on all fronts. Mussolini's "once more arise" was a futile exhortation. Italians were ready for a separate peace.

To prevent negotiation of this peace with Great Britain, the Germans had taken over control, not only of all the theaters of war with which Italy's armed forces were involved, but of the country itself. Hitler's Gestapo agents were watching the crowd in the Piazza Venezia while Mussolini spoke. In the old Hotel de Russie, at the Piazza del Popolo end of Rome's Via Babuino, known to thousands of American tourists for its antique shops, were the German high command's headquarters for Italy. There were the generals and admirals from Berlin, who for months had been "co-ordinating" Italy's enfeebled war effort with the enormously superior *Wehrmacht*, *Luftwaffe*, and *Reichsmarine*.

In the war-expanded German embassy, where scores of clerks and officials bustled at their tasks with staccato heeltaps, Nazi propagandists ground out the story of the Axis' new war venture, from Berlin press releases, for the Italian Ministry of Popular Culture to distribute among the Fascist newspapers, which Mussolini once called his "orchestra." Thus Italy's regime, her armed forces, her internal police, even her industry and agriculture were under direct Nazi tutelage.

It was no wonder, then, that Mussolini's inflated ego seemed

somewhat shrunken on that December afternoon, as though the compressed air of self-confidence, arrogance, and personal prestige was slowly escaping him.

That night, in a prison cell, I thought of the almost pathetic aspect of the man who once was Europe's number one dictator. I wondered if his sleep at night was sound.

I suspected that Mussolini, who all his life has been one of the loneliest men in the world, now was unhappy.

For Mussolini faced the greatest personal crisis in a long series that dogged his violent life since he was a dissatisfied, penniless schoolteacher, turned political agitator, self-exiled in Switzerland forty years ago. In every other crisis luck had been with him. Now only a German victory could save his prestige, while at the same time each German victory lessened his independence and his initiative.

The Duce had committed the greatest blunder of his career in rushing to join with Germany in war against France and Great Britain. It seemed a good idea at the time. The Germans with their blitzkrieg tactics had proved the soundness of his own theory of lightning war. Except that some countries refused to curl up and die when lightning struck them.

So poor was Italy's showing in the first months of its participation in the war and so superior was the Nazi might to that of Fascism that Italians were happy when Russia's Red Army unexpectedly stopped the German war machine.

"Hitler now has found *his* Greece," they said.

The official radio said that Mussolini on December 11 was "interrupted repeatedly by shouts" from "tumultuous crowds." That stereotyped description of the scene might fool people who had not witnessed it. Italians knew better. They knew that most of them were hoping intensely for the collapse of Fascism, that many would take heart at the thought that the United Nations, with America in the fight, would be strong enough, if they were determined, to overthrow Fascism.

And since Fascism in Italy is Mussolini, what fate awaits

him, I wondered, when the United States and Great Britain, victorious at last over Germany, topple the Nazi regime which is Italy's prop?

How had he escaped from other crises?

II

Murder Mystery

Those who delve into the dusty records of the world's murder mysteries and reconstruct them with a view to finding at last the key to their solution may well devote their talents one day to the case of Giacomo Matteotti. Whatever their findings, they must record that the knife which laid low the Socialist martyr of Italy almost cut short the Fascist regime of Benito Mussolini.

On a warm June day in 1924, Mussolini, prime minister of Italy, stood on the floor of the Chamber of Deputies, and delivered himself of a classic understatement.

"The situation," he told the 535 members of parliament, "is extremely delicate."

Delicate? It was practically catastrophic.

For 268 of his hearers, the admission was ominous. They were his Fascist followers and Fascism stood accused of murder. For his other listeners it was a confession of crisis in which 160 of them might find hope. They were his Socialist accusers whose leader had been slain, they were quick to charge, by a renegade of their party.

Mussolini was a violent man, too violent, they thought, to control the destiny of forty million Italians. His political philosophy stemmed from the teachings of the Socialist professor, Vilfredo Pareto; the German, Friedrich Nietzsche; the French "apostle of violence," Georges Sorel, and the Florentine cynic, Niccolo Machiavelli. They all advocated the use of force for the preservation of the state.

"There are two ways of contending, by law and by force,"

wrote Machiavelli in *The Prince*. "The first is proper to men; the second to beasts; but because many times the first is insufficient, recourse must be had to the second."

Mussolini wrote that he believed *The Prince* to be "the statesman's supreme guide."

But his enemies thought that murder was carrying the recourse to force very much too far.

Violence was a habit among the *Romagnoli.* And Mussolini came from Romagna, that region in central Italy where politics were red, where blood vengeance was as characteristic of political parties as it was of families in Sicily. There the men did not hesitate to use the knife in defense of a political faith.

Mussolini was the son of a poor village blacksmith with social revolutionary convictions. Alessandro Mussolini had served a term as mayor of his village, Predappio in Forli province, and had gone to prison for several months for his Socialism a few years before his son, Benito, was born to his wife, Rosa Maltoni, a schoolteacher, in their bare, second-story, two-room apartment July 29, 1883.

The son was named Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini after three revolutionaries: Benito Juarez, the Mexican who led the revolt against Emperor Maximilian which resulted in the execution of that unfortunate Hapsburg; Amilcare Cipriani and Andrea Costa, a pair of anarchist leaders of Romagna.

Benito lived up to his various namesakes from his boyhood in peasant poverty. His schoolboy combats got him expelled from a Catholic school for boys at Faenza, where his devout mother sent him over the protest of his anticlerical father. After he was sent home with two years of elementary education he completed his studies in a seven-year course at the Royal Normal School of Forlimpopoli. Like his mother, he taught school, and like his father, became a Socialist agitator.

During two vagrant years in Switzerland from 1902 to 1904, he was an indigent young emigrant, obsessed with atheism, republicanism, antimilitarism, and the principle of social revolution as a cure for the poverty which he felt so bitterly in his own youth.

In Switzerland he worked for a stonemason in summer, as delivery boy for a Lausanne wine merchant in winter, and as a Socialist agitator in both seasons. In Zurich he took up with Angelica Balabanoff, a fervent, self-exiled disciple of Marx from a well-to-do Russian family, who was the first woman of consequence in his life after his mother.

In her autobiography, *My Life as a Rebel*, Angelica Balabanoff describes her first sight of Mussolini at a Socialist meeting in Lausanne. She said he appeared as "an extremely dirty" young man, poorly dressed. "His agitated manner and unkempt clothes set him apart from the other workers in the hall."

He had not been able to find work because he was sick and was living as a "miserable vagrant," sleeping under bridges, eating at a co-operative restaurant at the expense of the Socialist party.

She thought his "radicalism and anticlericalism were more the reflection of his early environment and his own rebellious egoism than the product of understanding and conviction . . . It sprang from his own sense of indignity and frustration, his passion to assert his own ego, and from a determination for personal revenge."

With his avowed revolutionary ideas, Mussolini was watched by the Swiss police. In 1903 the Swiss put him back over the frontier into Italy. After a few months he returned to Switzerland, this time, some biographers say, as a draft-evader. At any rate, he advocated desertion from the army in February, 1904, when he wrote that it was "an infallible means of destroying from the foundation the infamous militarist constraint."

About this time the Forli police began to keep a secret dossier on Mussolini, the authenticity of which, so far as I find, has never been denied.

"As an individual of rather vivacious and sometimes impulsive and violent character, but because of an education that is exceptional among the working classes," it said, "he has enjoyed a good name. He has shown intelligence and some small culture, having attended the Royal Normal School of Forlimpopoli, where he took the higher courses. He is a hard worker and is supported by his family . . . He makes an active propaganda among the working class and earns a little money by it. He is capable of making speeches and has made some, one in Predappio, December 6, 1903, and another in Meldola, the 22d of the same month. Further, during his residence in Bern, where he made for himself a certain position among our workers who professed advanced opinions, he repeatedly spoke in their public meetings, and especially on the occasion of May 1, 1903, so much that he was registered by the Swiss police as a fervid Socialist orator. Toward the authorities he showed himself indifferent. He participates personally in all meetings of the party and since his return from Switzerland has assumed in Predappio the attitude of party leader."

The police record went on to say that on January 3, 1904, Mussolini left for Geneva in search of employment. On February 4 the Italian consul general at Geneva reported that Mussolini had been denounced to him as an anarchist. The report continued:

"Benito Mussolini was on April 10 declared absent without justification when his class was called for army service."

Finally, it noted that "December 31, 1904, having presented himself at the military district of Forli, as inscribed in the first category of conscripts in arrears of the class of 1883, Mussolini is assigned to the tenth regiment of Bersaglieri

stationed at Verona. On January 8, 1905, left for Verona where the regiment is stationed . . . On September 6, 1906, arrived at Predappio, released from the tenth regiment of Bersaglieri."

For a time Mussolini returned to the distasteful job of teaching. His career as a teacher ended when he was arrested for threatening an organizer of strike-breakers with his cane in a struggle between farm workers and landlords and found himself locked up in jail for fifteen days.

Then, in 1909, Mussolini found his calling. He became a Socialist journalist at Trento, at that time on the Austrian side of the frontier and a center of the Italian Irredentist movement for the return of the South Tyrol to Italy. There he edited a labor weekly, *L'Avvenire del Lavoratore* (The Future of the Worker), and wrote a soon-forgotten novel, *Claudia Particella*, about the mistress of a cardinal.

Mussolini's espousal of the Irredentist cause soon got him out of Austria. In a reference to Italy's claim on territory in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he wrote that "the frontier of Italy is not at Ala" and the Austrian police promptly put him across the frontier at Ala.

Back at Forli again, Mussolini became secretary of the regional Socialist federation, founded a weekly *La Lotta di Classe* (The Class Struggle) and, in 1911, campaigned against the Turkish-Italian war in Libya, for which he served five months in prison.

Imprisonment brought him fame and a great triumph. After his release he was called to Milan to edit *Avanti!* (Forward), daily organ of Italian Socialism. It was, in many respects, the most important post in the party and there he was when World War I broke out in Europe in 1914.

After he became editor of *Avanti!* with Angelica Balabanoff as his collaborator, he brought his wife, "a very humble-appearing, illiterate peasant woman," and an "undernourished,

poorly dressed little girl," to the office, where he introduced them as "my comrade Rachele and our daughter Edda." The description is Madame Balabanoff's.

Italy was an ally of Austria-Hungary, but the Socialist party advocated "absolute neutrality" in the war. As the party's spokesman, Mussolini wrote "Down with War." Then he decided to make his own editorial policy and advocated a "relative (or conditional) neutrality," which would allow the party to determine its attitude as the war developed. The party rejected the formula and Mussolini had to resign the editorship of *Avanti!* It was the first big turning point in his career.

He was abandoned by Angelica Balabanoff, who had been his closest companion and collaborator. She turned against him with bitter recriminations. Mussolini, she said, was a Judas, "guilty of the most infamous betrayal of modern times."

Mussolini was unperturbed by his critics. He had been called a *duce* (leader) of Socialism. Moved by overweening ambition, he was intent on heading a movement of his own in which he would be Duce with a capital D.

Within a month he launched his own paper, *Il Popolo d'Italia* (The People of Italy) at Milan, with a feverish campaign for Italian intervention in the war.

"We love France," he wrote. His detractors said French propaganda funds helped to inspire Mussolini's love. The Socialist party expelled him as a traitor to its principles.

Mussolini now became the great patriot. He served as a soldier, was wounded by a shell explosion, and was invalided home in 1917 to resume his editorial writing for *Il Popolo d'Italia.*

He returned from the front with a boundless ambition to run the country. As a Socialist and republican he had welcomed World War I as a prelude to revolution. He still

envisaged the overthrow of the monarchy and the proclamation of an Italian republic.

Discontent and pessimism, the backwash of war, had spread over Italy.

The country had entered World War I from what Mussolini called "sacred national egotism." It had regained the territories it claimed from Austria, but the egotism was not entirely satisfied in the peace treaties. Because Woodrow Wilson refused to recognize the secret London treaty of 1915 that brought Italy into the war with a promise of territory in Africa and on the Adriatic, the peacemakers of Paris denied to Italy the greatly coveted Dalmatia and a share in the African colonies of Germany.

Italians were made to feel abjectly defeated by the Allies, who had used them, they thought, and were now going to cheat them. The nationalists were especially displeased. They not only desired to annex all the territories included in the London agreement, but also Fiume, which was not included. They wanted a protectorate over Albania.

Economic depression was intense. Industries, dependent on foreign coal and steel, which the war had created were on the verge of ruin after the war orders stopped. Unemployment was growing. Official figures showed 400,000 were jobless in an industrial population of only four million workers. Italy's war casualties of 600,000 dead and a million injured seriously upset family economies. New taxation was proposed to meet the internal debt, which had risen sixfold. Domestic inflation and the world scarcity of goods had forced prices up to five times what they were before the war. Wages were lowered while the cost of living remained stationary.

The Socialists, impressed and emboldened by the success of the Soviets in Russia, advocated revolution by violent means as the only solution of Italy's problems. Having bitterly

opposed Italy's participation in the war, they assailed the government for its failure to keep the country out of the conflict. That provided Mussolini with a platform on which to wage his fight for power.

In March, 1919, there was a huge "Bolshevist" demonstration in Milan. Five days later, March 23, Mussolini called a meeting in a room on Milan's Piazza San Sepolcro, lent by the Merchants' Association. With 145 followers, he formed the *fasci di combattimento*, literally "bundles of fight." They were political shock troops who adopted the black shirts of the uniform the shock troops of the Italian army wore toward the close of the war.

The Fascists of the first hours, as Mussolini called them, numbered less than ten thousand, but they soon attracted members from the Nationalist factions until, by November, they numbered 17,000.

Mussolini's fighting squads, dressed in military breeches, black shirts, and tasseled fezzes like the fatigue caps of the Bersaglieri, were to battle in the streets for "the restoration of public order" and the suppression of Socialism.

Civil war was the consequence.

A rival revolutionary meanwhile was making a flamboyant bid for leadership in the poet-soldier, Gabriele d'Annunzio. With his "Legion from Ronchi," he occupied the city of Fiume in September, 1919. The national humiliation was alleviated. But the ferment of social discontent grew.

By the summer of 1920 the Communists and Socialists, active, noisy, and strong, were fighting for the creation of "factory workers' councils" in the metal working centers of Lombardy and Piedmont. Strikes broke out in almost every industrial town of the peninsula. Workers occupied the Fiat motor plant at Turin, the Odero shipyard at Genoa, factory buildings and industrial plants at Trieste, Cremona, and Milan.

They piled up arms in coal heaps and behind dynamos. High in the chimneys hung red flags. Machine guns were posted at every exit and on the roofs.

Conservative Italians feared a Bolshevik offensive. The fighting squads of Fascism became strikebreakers.

The dictatorship of the proletariat lasted just twenty days and collapsed by itself. The managers and engineers had quit their offices. Without them the factories lay idle. In a referendum conducted by Socialist organizations the men voted to go back to work, and the armed occupation of the factories ended September 25, 1920.

The civil war was by no means ended. The workers organized squads of Red Guards to defend the headquarters of the trade-unions against Blackshirt assaults. Socialists planted red flags on town halls. The Fascist squadristi tore them down.

Mussolini's shock troops dashed about the country in punitive expeditions. At Verona and Como they attacked Socialist strongholds. Both sides carried away dead and wounded. In villages the farmers placed wagons across the roads to prevent the transportation of Blackshirts from one town to another.

The Fascists systematically occupied regions threatened by strikes. Thousands of armed men in motor trucks would be massed on a single town or country area. Headquarters of the Socialist and Communist organizations, employment offices, trade-unions, workers' clubs, papers, and co-operatives, were smashed up.

The workers and peasants, armed with guns and grenades, occupied the villages, invaded the towns, raised barricades in the streets, and hunted down the Fascists. As soon as the death of a Fascist was reported from an outlying quarter or village the Blackshirts would rush to inflict reprisals. They attacked, sacked, and burned the houses of Socialist leaders. At first the Red Guards fired on their assailants and bloody street battles would ensue. But the Fascist bludgeons and bottles of castor

oil eventually drubbed and drained the fighting spirit out of them.

Finally, anti-Fascist workers decided on a strike July 31, 1922, for the maintenance of a "legal regime." The Fascists served an ultimatum on the government of Prime Minister Luigi Facta to prevent the strike under threat that they would occupy the provincial capitals. The strike took place and with it social war flared up again August 1, with rioting and street fighting. The anti-Fascists called off the strike August 4.

Some observers believe that Socialism then was in retreat, Communism cowed, Syndicalism knocked out and the menace of a Bolshevik revolution dispelled. Mussolini had eliminated the biggest obstacle in his path to power. He had broken up the proletarian organizations on which the government might rely for the defense of the state.

The star of his revolutionary rival, d'Annunzio, had fallen with the forcible expulsion of the poet and his legionaries from the city of Fiume by the government of Premier Giolitti in the bloody Christmas of 1920. Mussolini could concentrate on the middle-class opposition.

The Liberals, the Democrats and the Conservatives of the easygoing middle class had looked on all this turmoil from the comparatively quiet corridors of the Chamber of Deputies. Tranquillity, however, was only in the corridors, for a parliamentary crisis plagued Italy.

The pressing economic problems clamored for solution. A succession of prime ministers from the Liberals, Socialists, and the Catholic popular party, founded by the Sicilian priest, Don Luigi Sturzo, had failed to rally parliament and the country to a national program. A weak parliament and government invited defiance.

The Fascists were offered subordinate positions in the cabinet. Mussolini, fighting for power, refused to reach it "through the service entrance." Consumed by ambition, gifted with an astute political sense and an extraordinary singleness

of purpose, he relied on a combination of man power, intimidation, and brains to gain his immediate aim.

He had enough of democracy and elections. The first time he ran as a Fascist candidate for parliament in 1919 he was badly defeated. He had to wait two years after that to win enough votes to enter the Chamber of Deputies. Better, for his plans, was a march on Rome.

Mussolini organized the march. On October 16 he formed a "secret quadrumvirate of action" composed of Michele Bianchi, a Fascist from southern Italy; General Emilio De Bono, General Cesare Maria De Vecchi, and a young black-bearded flier, Italo Balbo. While they prepared for action the Duce issued his ultimatum.

At a congress of the Fascist party in Naples, October 24, Mussolini took "a solemn oath that either the government of the country must be given peacefully to the Fascisti or we will take it by force."

In an expedient volte face he declared allegiance to the king. That was designed to win the sympathies of the army, which had been repelled by his republican principles.

Mussolini's black-shirted Fascist followers, meanwhile, were efficiently organized as a personal militia. At Naples some 90,000 of them paraded before the Duce. He claimed to have the backing of 800,000 workers.

The quadrumvirate met in Florence, October 25, for its last war council. The next day it asked the Facta government to resign. The cabinet ministers in Rome offered their resignations to Facta the following day.

Mussolini had remained in Milan, composing a manifesto in the shabby little office of his newspaper, *Il Popolo d'Italia.* In the evening he went to the theater. The next evening, October 27, *Il Popolo d'Italia* rushed an extra edition to the streets with a proclamation in which the Duce ordered his already mobilized and armed supporters to march on the capital. They occupied the large cities, took possession of city

halls, railroad stations and post offices. The main body of militiamen assembled at Civitavecchia, north of Rome, and began the march.

In Rome, Facta declared martial law and took the decree to the king for his signature. General Pietro Badoglio told Vittorio Emanuele that he could rout the Fascists with a regiment of troops. But the king refused to take such a drastic step and the state of siege was rescinded. October 29 the king received De Vecchi, who came as an emissary from the quadrumvirate, which was established at Perugia. De Vecchi went to the king at ten o'clock in the morning with Antonio Salandra, a former liberal premier who was friendly to Fascism. Two hours later Mussolini received a telephone call, inviting him to Rome to form a cabinet. His coup had worked. The king had bowed to his power and dynamic will.

But Mussolini was taking no chances. He asked for confirmation by telegraph. Only after the message in the king's name reached him did Mussolini take a train for Rome at eight-thirty in the evening. The king's private motor car met him at Civitavecchia.

Arriving in the capital at ten-forty on the morning of October 30, Mussolini went to the Quirinale Palace without changing the soiled black shirt in which he had traveled and accepted the king's proposal that he form a cabinet.

Armed Fascist squads began to enter Rome, unresisted. The next afternoon, after Mussolini as prime minister and other members of his coalition ministry had taken the oath of office, forty thousand Blackshirts paraded through Rome, reviewed by their Duce and the king.

The so-called Fascist revolution had taken place. Now the task was to consolidate it.

The Fascists still were a minority, even in the government, where Mussolini's first cabinet included Liberals, Democrats, representatives of the Catholic popular party, and Nationalists. In such a situation the dictator required full powers to impose

his program and an army to enforce it. Mussolini had the personal army in his blackshirt squads. His full powers he obtained from parliament within a month of the March on Rome.

Thus armed, Fascism began a reign of terror to silence its critics with its cudgels.

Although they hated democratic forms of government, the Fascists still had to cope with a parliament. While Mussolini parried the attacks of the parliamentary opposition, his henchmen were determined to overpower it in the next election by any and all means. With that election, April 6, 1924, Mussolini gained his first majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Elected were 268 Fascists and 107 Liberals and Democrats, who joined with the Blackshirts to form the government majority. The opposition parties obtained only 160 seats.

Terror won the election for the Fascists and the Socialists were quick to protest, especially Giacomo Matteotti, their deputy from Rovigo. Matteotti had denounced Fascism as "an association of criminals" on the floor of the Chamber in 1921. He contested the April election of 1924. He denounced Fascist rule, he charged it with frauds and outrages. He declared the Fascist militia had rolled up 4,500,000 votes against the 3,000,000 of the opposition parties by beating up anti-Fascist candidates and forcibly detaining them at their homes. He demanded annulment of the election.

Mussolini, a week later, indignantly denied all Matteotti's charges. He defended his militia against charges that it was a Cheka, as cruel and relentless as that of Bolshevik Russia. Three days afterward, on June 10, Matteotti disappeared.

The disappearance raised a furor in Italy and abroad.

Investigators failed to find Matteotti's body, but they learned that as the deputy was leaving the parliament building at four o'clock in the afternoon of June 10 he was attacked by five men, overpowered, and thrown into a car.

The great tidal wave of indignation at home and abroad

threatened to swamp Fascism overnight. General De Bono was Fascism's police chief. He was forced to resign. Mussolini sought to save his embryonic regime from quick disaster by appointing a new minister of interior, Luigi Federzoni, a former Nationalist, to shake up the police administration. Three men were arrested, one each in Rome, Florence, and Milan, as the assassins.

Still the anti-Fascists laid the murder at Mussolini's door. They described one of the prisoners, Amerigo Dumini, as an employee of the premier. They implicated the discharged undersecretary of the interior, Frinzi, and Cesare Rossi, chief of Mussolini's press department in the crime.

It was to acquit himself and blame his enemies for the Matteotti murder that Mussolini took the floor of the Chamber that June afternoon.

"Only an enemy of mine, who for many a long night had meditated on some diabolic act against me, could have committed this crime which today fills us with horror, and draws from us a cry of indignation," the prime minister declared. His hearers were not convinced.

Mussolini promised that justice would be done, but that failed to check the political fight against him. The opposition parliamentary groups en bloc deserted Montecitorio, the parliament building, June 27, in protest against what their manifesto called an "illegal organization intended to carry out sentences pronounced against political opponents." They withdrew to a building on one of Rome's seven hills, in what became known as "the retreat to the Aventine."

The finding of Matteotti's butchered body, August 16, more than two months after his disappearance, fired the opposition to fresh fury. The body, headless, was found under a shallow layer of rubble in a ditch outside Rome.

The opposition's Olympian rage on the summit of the Aventine was impotent. With his opponents out of the Cham-

ber, Mussolini felt so safe that on January 3, 1925, he boldly announced his personal responsibility for Fascist action, outrages and all, in one of his most daring speeches.

"I declare here, face to face with this assembly, and before the Italian people, that I, alone, assume political, moral, and historic responsibility for everything which has happened," he declared.

Then, determined to destroy his enemies, Mussolini went on to announce the banishment of all parties other than his own Fascist party.

From that day on, Mussolini was an absolute dictator. He had escaped the threatened fall from power because the opposition had surrendered. It had walked out, disorganized, without a leader, a Matteotti, firm enough to consolidate the various groups and keep them in the Chamber.

The most dramatic phase of Fascist history was over. Mussolini had survived his first great crisis.

The Matteotti murder remains the darkest blot in the blood-stained book of Fascism.

The five men implicated in it went unpunished. Not until two years after the crime were they tried in 1926, at Chieti, in Abruzzi, with Roberto Farinacci, secretary of the Fascist party, as their counsel. Two were acquitted, the three others sent to prison, only to be released two months later under an amnesty granted to certain prisoners in 1925.

Many observers believed that Mussolini personally had no hand in the murder that nearly wrecked his political career. They believed the assassins were Fascist hotheads who went too far.

From San Antonio, Texas, in May, 1942, however, came an accusing document. An attorney of that city, Martin Arnold, had met Amerigo Dumini as an art dealer in Italy. Dumini had pleaded guilty at his trial and was given a five-year sentence, from which the amnesty freed him. He had to keep still as long

as he was alive. But he sent Arnold a confession, which was to be made public a month after his death.

When Arnold received news that Dumini was dead he carried out his instructions. The confession said Dumini received 100,000 lire for participation in the murder, but that the actual killing was the work of an accomplice who was with him in the kidnapers' car. It said the murderers were hired at the instance of Mussolini.

III

The Domestic Statesman

For the next ten years after the Matteotti murder the Italians who conformed to Fascism under the menacing cudgels of its strong-arm squads were able to enjoy relative peace. Mussolini was busy with a program of domestic reforms to justify his dictatorship and the building of the Fascist state to perpetuate it.

As ever in his career Mussolini was eager for the personal acclaim so gratifying to his vanity. And he succeeded in gaining the admiration and respect not only of many Italians but even of many persons in the democracies abroad. Prominent tourists returned home from Italy with reports that the trains ran on time, that Italy was made safe and orderly, and that Mussolini had given it an economic and social program. Mussolini used to ask those whom he received in audience what difference they found between the new Italy and the country before Fascism. The answer invariably was complimentary. An American to whom the question was put in 1927 replied:

"When you see an Italian in the street now he seems to be going somewhere. And the streets seem to be safe at night."

Mussolini threw back his large, bald head and laughed.

"I have sent all the gangsters to America," he said.

Kay and I went to Italy for a vacation a few years later and saw it through the sunglasses of the American tourist. Little of Fascism filtered through.

In Naples, as I lay in bed one sultry Sunday morning, a troop of boys in black shirts and shorts marched under the hotel window on their way to a camp for premilitary training.

In Florence the driver of a horse-drawn carriage turned in his seat and told us he had returned only recently from Chicago.

"I wish I had never come back to this country," he said.

"Why, because of Fascism?" I asked.

"Yes, I thought it was going to be different."

That was all we saw or heard of Fascism that summer in Italy. Tourists have so few contacts with the people, so little insight into their lives.

We were told that Mussolini had instilled a new national dignity among Italians, rejuvenated the country and hardened it. Hampered though it was by a lack of funds, the government had carried out an imposing program of public works, new railroads, industrial plants, land reclamation schemes, ports, electrification projects, schools, and workmen's dwellings.

There were no signs of general unrest, of war spirit, of tension among the people. The faces in the streets were as cheerful as any in democratic France.

We could see later, when we came to live in Italy, that Italians were paying a stiff price of lost personal and economic freedom for the peaceful streets and regular train schedules. They were regimented by the Fascist state and Mussolini could say with that seventeenth-century dictator of France, Louis XIV, "I am the state."

George E. Sokolsky has ably defined Fascism as "a collective economic and political system which centers all authority in the state and reduces the individual to the will of the state. Whereas democracy exalts the individual, making him the sovereign from which a government receives its powers, Fascism exalts the state to which the individual becomes enslaved. Everything for the state, nothing outside or above the state, is the Fascist principle. The totalitarian state controls all interests and activities of groups or individuals."

In Italy the final authority was the state, whose will was

expressed by the government, and the only one who spoke for the government was Mussolini.

Mussolini-the-State imposed social peace by outlawing strikes and lockouts. He expanded the railways and public works, the merchant marine, the highway system, the aqueducts and power plants. He promoted land reclamation, especially the draining of the Pontine marshes near Rome, to make thousands of acres of new fields for the growing of crops. He launched a Battle of the Grain to grow more wheat. He gave the workers a labor charter, social insurance, summer camps for children, and a maternity welfare service. He provided schools for all.

But the overalls of a proletarian state with which Mussolini pretended to clothe Italy were but the straitjacket uniform of Fascism. Through the labor charter of 1927 and the corporative system that followed, the state, that is to say, the Fascist government, controlled every relation of capital and labor. Under Fascism only the state had rights and the citizens had only duties which the state laid down for them to fulfill.

The worker lost in freedom. Before Fascism he could belong to any political party and, theoretically, at least, vote as he pleased. Now he had to be a Fascist or find himself with little chance of obtaining work. Before Fascism he could belong to an independent trade-union. Now he had to belong to a sort of company union, set up by Fascism and called a syndicate, although it bore little if any resemblance to the revolutionary syndicalism of France, Spain, and pre-Fascist Italy.

Under Fascism each great group of trades had its corporation, or guild, to which both employers and employees were obliged to belong. Grouped in the corporations were the syndicates, each embracing employers and the employed of a single trade in a locality. Each syndicate made a collective bargain, binding both the employers and the employees. The government maintained unlimited control over the syndicates,

whose officers and decisions were subject to its approval. Mussolini, as president of each corporation, made its program and policies for it.

One had to be a Fascist, at least in name, to belong to a syndicate. Mussolini once said, "It is the party, with the mass of its rank and file, which brings to the authority of the state the weight of its voluntary consent, or the incalculable power of a faith."

The chance to earn a livelihood, rather than faith, impelled most Italians to join the Fascist party. The fasces emblem which they wore on their buttonhole was the key to a job and the party membership card which they carried in their pocket they called a meal ticket.

Corporatism became, in effect, economic nationalism in the sense that all industry was controlled by the state on the basis of a common obligation (called "social duty" in the Fascist charter) to work. The big capitalists in Italy had subscribed to Fascist funds in the strikebreaking days before the March on Rome. They found some return in the new law that prohibited strikes as a criminal offense after Fascism came to power. But they, too, had to pay a price of freedom.

Fascism required every owner of property to use it for national ends. If not, the state could step in, take control, and even, in extreme cases, appropriate the property. Many industrialists who financed Mussolini promptly wished they hadn't. Some made the most of the situation by obtaining contracts from the government, particularly for arms. They found it helped them if they bought an occasional full-page advertisement in Mussolini's newspaper, *Il Popolo d'Italia.*

Terror was the instrument with which Mussolini enforced his program and stifled his critics. Beatings and arbitrary imprisonments were the rule. The Fascists turned their enemies inside out with what the late William Bolitho called "the obscene torture of castor oil."

Mussolini armed his terror with the National Fascist Militia,

directly dependent on the prime minister, the first such institution in the history of Europe. He set up a Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State, composed of five judges chosen from among the officers of his militia. Before it were brought active anti-Fascists, whose detection usually was the work of the militia or the secret police. The tribunal was unhampered by established legal procedure. There was no appeal from its sentences of banishment, known as confino, to towns in the interior of Italy or to the Lipari Islands off Sicily, for a period of one to five years.

The secret police was organized under the Ministry of the Interior, which Mussolini headed. It was called the OVRA in abbreviation of its name, Organizzazione Volontaria Repressione Antifascista (Organization for Repression of Anti-Fascism). It was first mentioned publicly in a communiqué in 1930 which disclosed that the OVRA had rounded up three anti-Fascist organizations.

After the Matteotti murder several attempts on Mussolini's life led to a series of repressive measures for "the defense of the state," promulgated in 1926.

In 1925 a General Zaniboni was found guilty of plotting to shoot the Duce from a distance with a rifle trained on the balcony of his office, then in the Chigi Palace. Zaniboni was sentenced to thirty years' imprisonment. In 1926 an Irish woman, Miss Violet Gibson, fired a pistol at Mussolini during a ceremony in Rome. The bullet scratched the Duce's nose. The woman was deported to England.

Mussolini, it was said, took to wearing an undershirt of mail, made in England. It saved him from a shot fired from a crowd of cheering Blackshirts as they pressed around his open car in Bologna, where he was celebrating the fourth anniversary of the March on Rome. A young Socialist was stabbed to death on the spot by enraged Fascists, but correspondents suspected the shot was fired by one of Mussolini's own party, already splitting into radical and conservative factions. The

Duce told the correspondents, "If I am killed, it will be by the hand of a member of the Fascist party."

Shortly afterward an anarchist threw a bomb against Mussolini's car. The Duce was unhurt.

In tightening up the police measures Mussolini was able to consolidate his victory over his parliamentary foes. The opposition groups on the Aventine had drifted apart. When the members of the popular party attempted to return to the Chamber of Deputies in 1926, Mussolini declared they would be "tolerated" only if they accepted Fascism unconditionally. That ended parliamentary government in Italy.

The first law to suppress anti-Fascism came January 31, 1926. It declared that a citizen who committed abroad an act intended to disturb the public order of Italy or injurious to Italian interests or prestige should lose his citizenship, even if the act was not a crime. It also provided for sequestration or confiscation of the person's property. It was immediately applied to seventeen noted Italian emigrés.

Another regulation required everybody in the kingdom to carry an identity card and provided that nobody might emigrate without permission of the police authorities.

The new regulations also provided that persons accused of crimes against the state, or who were "ill-famed," might be "admonished" by a disciplinary commission from whose verdicts there was no appeal. They were required to report their movements to the police, and could be deported to various points of Italy or the colonies. Within a year it was estimated that 1,541 persons were listed as "ill-famed," 959 "admonished," and 698 deported, chiefly to the penal colony on the Lipari Islands, where anti-Fascists reported not only physical hardships but moral ill effects from imprisonment at the mercy of a brutal police.

The defense of a prisoner before the Special Tribunal frequently was a farce. At the trial in 1930 of a Slovene group, accused of setting off a bomb in the plant of a Fascist news-

paper in Trieste, the defense council, appointed by the court, said "death would be the proper thing" for his clients. At another trial in 1930 the president of the court interrupted the proceedings to denounce the defendants as "liars" and "worms." That was a year of mass arrests in a plot to overthrow the Fascist regime. Four hundred anti-Fascists fled over the Alps into France.

The number of persons convicted of opposition to Fascism was impossible to ascertain, but 19,572 prisoners were freed under an amnesty on the tenth anniversary of the March on Rome in 1932. The hunt for Mussolini's enemies was never relaxed.

The terror drove the anti-Fascist movement underground until there was no more widespread opposition.

As the admiration of Mussolini rose, because of the executive genius of the man that even his critics recognized, the mass of the population sank into political indifference.

The straitjacket censorship of the press reduced the newspapers throughout Italy to servile collaboration with the government, which standardized the news for them and made their editorials monotonous variations on the theme of the day as expressed by Mussolini. The prefect was the censor in each province, with power to sequestrate an offending newspaper. After a certain number of sequestrations the prefect could issue a warning, and two such warnings might result in suspension, or even suppression, of the paper.

Mussolini's *Il Popolo d'Italia* became the mouthpiece of the government and one of the wealthiest newspaper properties in Italy. It was considered good political insurance to subscribe for the paper and to advertise in it. Newspaper circulation figures are secret in Italy, but *Il Popolo d'Italia* was believed to have outstripped *Il Corriere della Sera* of Milan, which formerly had the largest circulation and was distinguished by the literary quality of its articles.

Along with economic nationalism Mussolini adopted politi-

cal nationalism as a policy. He put everybody in uniform, almost literally from the cradle. He fancied himself as the great patriot and shaped Italian patriotism in the pattern of Fascism. Mussolini pressed 2,000,000 boys into Fascist corps for "military and moral training" under 100,000 Blackshirt officers. He liked to think of Fascism as a youth movement.

Fascism had attracted youth to it as a way to escape post-war weariness and disillusionment, as well as an instrument for the realization of Nationalist aspirations. To the youthful members of Fascism observers attributed the hero worship of Mussolini, the emphasis on sport and physical education, and the theme song of Fascism, "Giovinezza," which opens with the words, "Youth, youth, springtime of beauty, Fascism is the safeguard of our liberty."

Not only the school children, but their teachers, were put in uniforms, for culture, along with everything else in Italy, was cut to a Fascist pattern.

Mussolini, a coarse-fibered peasant, made no pretense to the culture of a university graduate. He had only a superficial veneer of culture. He was supposed to have attended a few lectures of Pareto at Lausanne, but he was not enrolled as a student in the university there. He picked up a fair acquaintanceship with French, German, and English during his Swiss exile, but it is doubtful if he read more than a few excerpts from the works of Machiavelli, Sorel, and the other masters he professed to follow.

All that mattered with Mussolini when he applied culture to the Italian schools was that the textbooks "must possess the spirit of Fascism." This consisted of extolling militarism and instilling "love for the Duce."

This was the picture of Italy in 1934.

The government was no longer popular and was about to lose the last vestige of parliamentary form. Instead of elections, Fascism had introduced plebiscites, conducted every five years without free competition of rival policies and parties, and

without even the freedom of choice implied by complete liberty to abstain from voting. The 1928 electoral law made a single election district of the whole nation for the ratification of a hundred-per-cent Fascist Chamber of Deputies from candidates nominated by Fascist organizations.

The only question put to the voters was this: "Do you approve of the list of deputies designated by the National Grand Council?" At the first election in 1929, ballots colored the red, white, and green of the Italian flag were inscribed "Yes," while those inscribed "No" were white, so that the Fascist militiamen, watching at the ballot boxes, could detect those who voted "No." Of the 9,674,049 registered voters, 8,663,412 went to the polls and voted: 8,519,559, yes; 135,761, no. The other ballots were "spoiled."

Thus was elected Mussolini's first rubber-stamp parliament. The last was elected by a similar overwhelming vote in 1934.

Mussolini, meanwhile, endeavored to make the rule of a single political party, the Fascist party, constitutional and perpetuate it by a law of December 9, 1928. This law transformed the Fascist Grand Council, governing body of the Fascist party, into a constitutional organ of the state, with advisory functions. The council was empowered to nominate the eventual successor to Mussolini by submitting a list of names to the king. It also was empowered to ratify the succession to the throne.

Democracy had completely vanished with the law of December 24, 1925, which made the prime minister responsible solely to the Crown, and the executive power independent of legislative power.

All Mussolini's political and social reforms, all his one-man brain-trusting, however, could not save Italy from the world depression which followed the resounding crash of 1929 in the United States.

Fascism's economic policies changed as radically and frequently as its shifting political policies. First came a period of

industrial inflation during the four years of 1922-1926, when Fascism was too busy with the internal political crises to pay much attention to economic matters.

Mussolini's first minister of finance, Alberto De Stefani, attempted a three-point program to reduce the state's budget by reducing its functions, to effect rigid economies in all branches of government, and to stimulate industrial production and the investment of capital. Under this program, Socialist land legislation was repealed and government subsidies for co-operatives were withdrawn. The telephone service, formerly operated by the state, was turned over to private companies. The government reduced the numbers and pay of railway and postal employees. Funds which normally would have gone into public works were turned over to private concerns, and capital made fresh loans to industry, which built up a large export trade.

Fascist Italy had its nearest approach to a boom. When De Stefani attempted to halt the industrial expansion by controlling stock speculation and restricting the activities of banks, he was thrown out of office. Count Volpi di Misurata, the powerful Venetian banker, took over from De Stefani, went to the United States, made a favorable settlement of war debts, and came home with a $100,000,000 loan floated by Morgan & Company as the fiscal agent. Italian credit sank, nevertheless, and the lira was tottering when, on August 18, 1926, Mussolini called a halt to inflation and announced a policy of deflation.

Once the government stepped in, it took energetic measures to protect the currency and prevent speculative crises. It used the American loan to reduce the bank note circulation, raised a forced internal loan to fund the floating debt of short-term notes, and required all merchants to pay "licenses" of 500 to 1000 lire. Three banks had been allowed to issue bank notes. Now the Banca d'Italia was made the only bank of issue.

The banks, denied additional resources, were compelled to limit their credits to industry. That forced a general movement of industrial retrenchment, consolidations, reorganizations, the lowering of production costs through reduction of wages. The industrialists disregarded wage agreements when they began to feel an unexpected slump, largely the result of a decline of exports, for they had nothing to fear from Fascism, which had outlawed strikes and lockouts.

The depression hit Italy hard in 1930, producing a situation which required more continuous and systematic intervention by the Fascist state. From 1929 to 1932, when Mussolini said "the worst is over," a drop of 60 per cent in foreign trade, 40 per cent in domestic trade, 50 per cent in industrial production, 50 per cent in investments, and an increase of about 250 per cent in unemployment were shown by official statistics.

State intervention took various forms. The government created "institutes" or semipolitical bodies to revive the dozen or more suffering branches of economy from the textile to the tourist industries. They not only made public loans and subsidies to important branches of national production, but also exercised a centralized control which many found irksome when the emergency had passed.

The government fixed wages and rents. It established a rigid control over the exportation of money and the importation of raw materials.

But state control of production, if anything, hampered Italy's economic development. Fascism proved to be no more effective as a panacea than capitalism. In 1934 the export trade was still declining for lack of raw materials. The Fascist regime was undergoing a crisis of burdensome expenditures for armaments, unemployment, and social discontent.

As elsewhere all the businessmen wanted was to be left as free as possible from government control, make some money, and be able to enjoy it.

Unable to rub a magic lamp and produce an easy life for his people, Mussolini decided to give them a shot in the arm of what he called revolution, but which turned out to be imperialism and war.

"A danger threatens the regime," the Duce declared in a speech March 19, 1934, "a danger that is usually called the 'bourgeois spirit,' the spirit of satisfaction and accommodation, the tendency towards skepticism and compromise, the love of ease and a career. . . . The Fascist creed is heroism, the bourgeois creed is egoism. Against this danger there is but one remedy: the principle of continuous revolution."

Mussolini's government, in plainer words, was threatened with the same discontent which harassed every other government in the world that was groping for a path out of the economic depression. For Mussolini, that path was the highway to empire.

"Italy's historical objectives can be named in two words, Asia and Africa," he declared in 1934.

"It is not a question of territorial conquests, and this should be understood by all, near and far, but of a natural expansion, which must lead to co-operation between Italy and the tribes of Africa, as well as between Italy and the nations of the Near and Far East . . . Italy is able to do this: its position in the Mediterranean, a sea that is resuming its historical function of connecting east and west, gives it this right and imposes this duty."

That was Mussolini's first announcement to the world that Fascist nationalism had expanded into imperialism.

It is true that Mussolini's foreign minister, Dino Grandi, had advanced Italian claims to expansion in Africa in a speech in 1932. That same year Mussolini sent the white-whiskered General De Bono to inspect the Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somalia, which bordered Abyssinia. But nothing was said in the next two years to let the world know that Mussolini was determined to use Italy's East African bases as springboards

for war on Ethiopia if intimidation failed to bring that potential colony under his sway.

Now Mussolini was about to apply his triple technique of manpower, intimidation, and brains, which had succeeded so well within Italy, to the solution of an even greater crisis in the international field.

Only once before had he used it outside of Italy and found that it worked against a weaker power. That was in the Corfu incident of 1923.

General Enrico Tellini, president of the Italian commission for delimitation of the Greco-Albanian frontier, with a medical officer, Major Luigi Corti, and Lieutenant Mario Bonacini, was motoring with an Italian chauffeur and an Albanian interpreter on the Janina-Santi Quaranta road the morning of August 27.

They had started from Janina on the Greek side of the border for the actual spot where the frontier was being traced. A car containing the Albanian section of the commission was in front and a car with the Greek section followed.

When the Italian car was about thirty miles out of Janina, a volley of shots rang out from the thick woods in the foothills. The Greek contingent arrived to find the Italian car riddled with bullets, its five occupants lying dead about or in it. None had been robbed, so it appeared not to be the work of bandits.

That was Monday. On Wednesday the Italian minister at Athens presented a seven-point ultimatum. Greece rejected as unfounded the demands that it carry out a strict inquiry, with the assistance of the Italian military attaché, that all persons found guilty of the attack be sentenced to death, and that Greece pay Italy, within five days, the sum of fifty million lire, then about $2,500,000, as a penalty.

At 3 P.M., August 31, Mussolini sent his reply. An Italian naval squadron approached the island of Corfu, the commander informed the prefect in writing that he intended to

occupy the island, and he demanded that a white flag be hoisted over the fortress.

The prefect was slow in answering. The squadron fired on the fortress, which was occupied only by Greek and Armenian refugees, some fifteen of whom were killed. The white flag went up and the island was surrendered.

The Italians occupied Corfu nearly a month, evacuating it September 27 on Greece's payment of the fifty million lire indemnity. The League of Nations had tried to settle the incident, but a council of ambassadors arranged the settlement before the League could act.

That was Mussolini's first experience with the League and he scorned it ever afterward.

But this time it was not a little Balkan state, like Greece, or solely a bunch of backward African tribes, with whom Italy had to deal. In colonial politics Mussolini, the realist, knew he had to contend with two big powers expert in that field, Great Britain and France.

It had long been Mussolini's ambition to play power politics. For a small country like Italy, which had been a unified nation for only slightly more than half a century, to play the game of power politics it was necessary to play one country against another. That was Mussolini's system.

But first he had to reassure everybody that Fascist Italy meant only peace and good will toward the other countries of Europe so long as they co-operated with him.

The distrust of Fascism, as a political ideal, was almost as great among the other countries as the fear of Communism.

If the three big European democracies at the time Mussolini came to power, Great Britain, France, and Germany, did not actually oppose his regime, their political parties, especially the Socialists, were bitter in their denunciation of it. They were bitter and apprehensive that their political rivals might adopt the tactics of Fascism to overcome them and the free

institutions under which they lived, as Mussolini did in Italy. To reassure the governments and the political parties, therefore, the Duce declared in the Italian Chamber of Deputies in 1928 that "Fascism is not an article of export."

Mussolini probably meant what he said. Having become one of the dominant figures on the European scene, he would probably have preferred to remain the only dictator that counted west of Russia and Turkey. If so, Hitler was to spoil that for him.

Adolf Hitler, the frustrated Austrian painter, like Mussolini a corporal in the World War, discontented with his youth, ambitious, and a revolutionary, had watched the Italian successfully apply his technique of revolution. Hitler became the pupil and Mussolini was the master, whether or not he wished it. Hitler adopted brown instead of black shirts for his National Socialist Militia, but the tactics he employed to fight his way to the top were those of Fascism.

So successful was Hitler in his onslaught to wreck German democracy that Mussolini in 1932 had to acknowledge the spread of Fascism beyond Italy's frontiers.

"In ten years," he predicted, "Europe will be Fascist or Fascistized."

For Germany it was only a matter of months. Governments were collapsing one after another in Berlin. In January, 1933, old President Hindenburg called Hitler and made him chancellor of the Reich. Hitler's first cabinet, incidentally, was like Mussolini's first ministry, one of coalition with limited powers. The second Fascist revolution in Europe, called Nazi, had taken place.

It is doubtful if Mussolini welcomed Hitler's achievement of success. He obviously mistrusted an emulator who, with a greater country to begin with, was starting out with the avowed aim of making Germany still greater.

Hitler and Mussolini met for the first time at Venice in 1934. Friends of mine who saw them together said they

showed little cordiality. As one expressed it, they "sniffed at each other cautiously."

Beatrice Baskerville, long the Rome correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph*, told the story that Mussolini went aboard the flagship of the naval guard of honor at Venice after listening to Hitler talk all day.

"How are things going, Duce?" asked the admiral. Mussolini shot out his lower jaw.

"*Pagliaccio*. The man's a buffoon," Mussolini commented.

Soon after the Venice meeting Hitler ordered a blood purge of his party. Some prominent Nazis were executed, others imprisoned. *Il Popolo di Roma*, in an editorial on July 29, said the Nazis were "murderers and pederasts—only this and nothing else." Italians were appalled at the cold-blooded brutality of the Nazis.

In 1934, then, Mussolini needed a quick international success, to allay the economic discontent at home, to restore his prestige over the ridiculous but even more ruthless dictator of Germany, and finally to give Italy the place in the sun he had promised. He had hatched the idea of Ethiopia's conquest when Hitler's fanatical face rose over Europe in 1932. It was about time to carry it out. In August, 1924, Mussolini declared that Italy must be prepared for war.

Yet a colonial war for Italy, too weak to fight a major adversary, required diplomatic preparation. That meant negotiations with Great Britain and France, for they controlled the League of Nations where Ethiopia, as a member, would most certainly look for protection. And while Mussolini had no respect for the League, he knew the British and French would be vitally interested in anything affecting the colonial map of Africa.

Mussolini had already made a deal with the British over Ethiopia. In 1925, under French protest, Rome and London agreed to respect one another's sphere of influence. Italy was

to be permitted to build a railroad across Ethiopia, connecting its two East African colonies, Eritrea and Somaliland.

The English had come to terms with Mussolini, perhaps, in the hope of bringing Italy into a plan for general disarmament. They also looked to Italy for co-operation against the growing menace of Germany. In July, 1932, Great Britain and France had signed a consultative pact to keep each other informed on questions affecting the European situation, to co-operate in disarmament methods, and to collaborate in the preparation of a world economic conference which eventually was to fail miserably at London.

Italy had subscribed to the Anglo-French pact. Not only that, but Mussolini had proposed a four-power agreement between Italy, Great Britain, France, and Germany to consult one another and present agreements to the smaller powers of Europe for their acceptance. An agreement was reached on that pact but it was never ratified by the French.

Franco-Italian relations had been bad ever since Fascism came into power.

IV

French Interlude

The French, Machiavelli wrote, "grow so careless by degrees that it is no hard matter, finding them in disorder, to master and overcome them."

France was decidedly in disorder in 1934. It was torn by trouble more violent than the Third Republic had experienced since the World War. Fascism was the issue and while the French disciples of Fascism lost their own fight they helped the Italian who inspired them to win the battles he was to wage eventually on the international field.

The strife among the parties in the neighboring democracy must have given Mussolini secret pleasure.

The Italians, who were newcomers to the conference tables of European nations, resented the indifference with which other peoples treated them. They were most sensitive toward their Latin sister, Marianne, who disregarded her poor relation with a rich and satisfied air. When the French called the Italians "macaronis," their equivalent of "wops," the Italians were furious.

The clash between the political ideologies of democracy and dictatorship added heat to the friction between France and Italy. The French democrats were more hostile to Fascism than any other people. Hundreds of Italian anti-Fascists had taken refuge in France, always the hospitable haven of political emigrés. Because of this, Mussolini accused France of fomenting plots against his regime.

More important, Italy wanted naval parity with France in the Mediterranean, which Rome lacked under the existing

treaties. Mussolini had revived the policy of *mare nostrum* and even if the Mediterranean was not Italy's own private sea, even if Italy was not rich enough to support a fleet as big as France's, Mussolini wanted France to recognize Italy's right to it on paper.

The French, on their part, felt that Mussolini had committed sabotage on their attempt to reach a rapprochement with the German Republic before Hitler came along and made rapprochement impossible.

Mussolini had made a speech in the Italian Senate in 1928, in which he came out in favor of the revision of the peace treaties to satisfy Germany and the other vanquished countries. For France, that speech was a blow aimed at the Franco-German rapprochement for which Briand and Stresemann had worked so hard.

Since then, Stresemann was dead, Germany had fallen into the hands of Hitler, there were no German democrats for the French to talk with. Now there was a disquieting dictatorship not only in Italy but also in Germany.

France was finding out that Fascism, after all, was an article of export.

One morning in Paris, as I stood in the window of The Associated Press office on the Rue Vivienne, my attention was attracted by men in uniform who entered and left a stairway within a few doors of the Havas news agency. Uniforms in France are fairly well defined. The uniform I saw was a new one. It consisted of a blue shirt, a blue trench cap, breeches, boots, and a Sam Browne belt, without pistol holster.

Curious, I enquired in the Café des Finances on the corner across from the Bourse and learned that the men were members of a new political group who called themselves Francistes. They professed the Italian brand of Fascism and talked of a corporative dictatorship for France patterned after that of Mussolini's Italy. They greeted one another with the Fascist salute, held political meetings at which they tried to enlist enough

members to impose Francisme on France, and were so few and ridiculous that the cyclists who came to the Havas office to collect dispatches for the newspapers laughed at them over their wine glasses.

I do not know what ever happened to the Franciste chief, Marcel Bucard. It is unimportant because he and his so-called movement were unimportant.

What was important was the political crisis that brought them on the scene and shook France with a year of civil war almost as violent as that which, in Italy half a generation earlier, resulted in the March on Rome.

As in Italy it was a civil war of rioting and clashes between the Left and the Right, those who leaned toward Fascism and those who opposed it. The issue, reduced to the simplest form, was dictatorship or democracy.

It began at the outset of 1934. The year 1933 was one of toppling cabinets in France. The people were tired of the constant changes in the government, a financial policy of high taxation to meet the chronically unbalanced budget that increased the cost of living in a period of dwindling employment and trade. The state economies involving pay cuts angered government employees. Fears for the safety of the franc caused uneasiness. The increased unemployment resulted in economic distress.

The growing unrest came to a head in January, when the newspapers took the lid off one of France's rottenest political scandals. Alexandre Stavisky, a notorious swindler and gambler of Polish origin, had managed to gain control of the municipal pawnshop in Bayonne. It was a rich affair, for Bayonne had a casino and the men and women who played there often had to take their diamonds and emeralds to the pawnshop after a disastrous night at the tables.

Not only were the mayor of Bayonne, a deputy, and several journalists implicated in this swindle, but a cabinet minister was compelled to resign.

The country was bitter and disgruntled at the parliamentary wrangling and disclosures of graft in high places, so much so that the cabinet of Premier Camille Chautemps resigned. Another perennial minister of the Radical-Socialist party, which was neither Radical nor Socialist, but bourgeois, formed a moderate and weak cabinet.

For days Paris mobs fought the police. At first the rioters were mostly the hotheaded marching units of the royalist Action Française, which kept alive the monarchist hope of some day restoring the Bourbon throne of France. But other Nationalist groups had gravitated around a half-dozen would-be political leaders. The largest was the Croix de Feu, the "fiery cross" organization of World War veterans.

For days the billboards of Paris flamed with the red and blue ink of political posters calling for a cleanup in the government. The morning of February 6 a new poster appeared among them, calling on citizens to mass under the banner of the Croix de Feu that evening when Daladier went before the Chamber of Deputies to ask a vote of confidence for his new cabinet.

By sundown the boulevards were tense. As the new cabinet filed into the crowded Chamber of Deputies on the left bank of the Seine, the Rightist groups by the hundreds marched into the Place de la Concorde, directly across a broad bridge from the parliament. They came with banners flying and massed in the vast square where once women of the people sat and knit while the guillotine slashed off the heads of the nobles in the great French Revolution.

Across the river, within the Chamber, Daladier asked for confidence in a promise to investigate the Stavisky scandal to its very depth, and regardless of the political careers it ruined.

As he was speaking, the mob surged forward in a mass intent on storming the bridge across the Seine. From the police came a volley of shots over the heads of the rioters. Another volley

was fired, this time into the crowd. Men in the front ranks dropped to the pavement. The crowd surged backward.

From the Hôtel de Ville, Communists marched along the quai toward the Place de la Concorde, chanting "Les soviets partout, soviets everywhere!"

Ahead of the marchers all was riot and confusion. Overturned buses and private motor cars were burning in the streets, littered with the lumber and scattered paving blocks of smashed barricades. Jets of flame roared like geysers as high as housetops where the standards of gas lamps were broken off at the sidewalk.

Fire fighters were hosing a smoldering door of the Ministry of Marine, where the rioters had applied a torch. In Weber's Café on the Rue Royale, men with bullet wounds lay on the tables while doctors treated their injuries with the aid of volunteer nurses from among the fashionable customers who were sitting there over their drinks when the hell broke loose.

Although Daladier received two votes of confidence amid an uproar in the Chamber the night of February 6, he was forced to bow to the will of the rioters and resign with his week-old cabinet. He declared bitterly that the rioting was instigated by armed agitators who sought to overthrow the democratic form of government under the Third Republic. He said the mob would have attacked the Chamber, perhaps burned it with its assembly of deputies, had the police not fired.

President Albert Lebrun called his 71-year-old predecessor, Gaston Doumergue, from retirement in the south of France to take over the premiership and form a nonpartisan government.

Groups of the Right were mainly responsible for the disorder of that night. The revolutionary attempt had failed because it was not a patiently organized and disciplined movement. It never got beyond an outburst of various sections of opinion against the six hundred "parliamentary dictators" who

occupied the Palais Bourbon. It lacked a ruthless, uncompromising leader, as Mussolini had been in Italy.

All through the summer disorders occurred. The Socialists and Communists signed a pact to fight Fascism in a Left-wing common front whose marching units were called the Red Falcons.

Doumergue showed authoritarian tendencies that hampered his own appeasement efforts among the parties of the Left. His government lasted less than a year and the hand of Mussolini helped to wreck it.

As foreign minister, Doumergue had Louis Barthou, an old goat-bearded diplomat, who believed that France's security against Germany lay in alliances that would form a cordon sanitaire around France.

Barthou was not afraid of the so-called Bolshevik peril, but saw a possible defense for France in the Red Army. He negotiated a defensive alliance with Russia. At the same time he worked to strengthen France's alliances with Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia.

King Alexander of Yugoslavia looked to France as a possible defender against an Italy which he did not trust. He was aware that Italy's failure to obtain Dalmatia in the peace treaties after World War I rankled in the Mussolini breast.

To cement their mutual friendship the French invited Alexander to visit Paris. He arrived at Marseille on a Yugoslav warship, October 10, stepped ashore to be welcomed by Louis Barthou, and entered an open motor car with the foreign minister to ride through the streets in procession to the railway station, where a special train waited to bring him to Paris.

As the procession moved slowly through Marseille's main street a man forced his way through the sidewalk crowd, fired at the car in which Alexander was riding with Barthou, then jumped on the running board and finished off the two statesmen with more pistol shots. Almost simultaneously a mounted guard reared his horse over the assailant and slashed at him

with a saber, a policeman shot him, and the crowd jumped on him. When the crowd was pushed back the assassin was dead.

Stung by the immediate criticism of their laxity at Marseille, the agents of the French detective force, the Sureté Nationale, soon tracked down the assassin's accomplices. When the French took two suspects off a train at the Swiss frontier, Yugoslav detectives identified them at once as members of a Croat terrorist gang, the Ustachi. In a day or two, gendarmes picked up two more members of the band in the forest of Fontainebleau, near Paris. The story that soon unfolded was one of international intrigue, with Italy heavily involved.

The Yugoslavs and the French reconstructed a story of a murder farm in Hungary, where the Ustachi gunmen practiced on a pistol range with an effigy of Alexander as a target. Master-mind of the Ustachi was Doctor Ante Pavelich, a Zagreb lawyer who had fled Yugoslavia under a sentence of death for revolutionary activities. The Yugoslavs charged that Pavelich had ordered the assassination of Alexander. The gunmen had drawn lots to determine the one who was to fire the shots. A mysterious blonde gun-girl carried their arsenal in a suitcase from Switzerland into France.

Pavelich was in Turin, with his chief henchman, Eugene Kvaternik. The Yugoslavs charged that Italy was harboring Pavelich, as the Hungarians had harbored the men at the murder farm. The French demanded the extradition of Pavelich. Mussolini's government said the Croat lawyer was under arrest, but it refused to give him up.

The scandal was taken to the League of Nations, where everybody agreed to exercise a more rigid control over terrorists within his frontiers. Eventually the prisoners in France were tried at Aix-en-Provence, their defense paid for by Croatians in America, and were sentenced to imprisonment for twenty-five years.

Mussolini's police released Pavelich and the Duce installed him with his wife and two daughters in a villa at Siena.

In the Quai d'Orsay, meanwhile, Pierre Laval had succeeded Barthou. It was a fateful appointment, not only for France, but for Italy and perhaps for Europe. Doumergue gave up the struggle of trying to pacify the French, resigned, and Pierre-Etienne Flandin, a near-Nationalist, became premier. Laval remained in the Foreign Ministry to become the first appeaser of, and collaborator with, the dictatorships.

In France the democrats won for a time, but the struggle was not over at the end of 1934.

It was destined to weaken the French morale until the tanks of Hitler's army, crashing into France with lightning thrusts six years later could overrun a bewildered defense and occupy Paris. And Italy, whose Fascism was imported into France whether Mussolini willed it or not, was to bark at the heels of a whipped people in the hope of getting a share in the spoils when Hitler made them pay for his conquest.

France was one of the keys to Mussolini's war on Ethiopia, as it was to be one of the keys to Franco's war on Republican Spain and the war of all the dictators on the democratic world.

I believe that Mussolini was emboldened to begin his Ethiopian aggression by the fact that France was vitally concerned with its own domestic troubles. There is little doubt that when Fascism made its demands on France in 1939, these, too, were inspired by Mussolini's belief that France was crippled by internal dissension.

V

The Urge to Empire

Mussolini is a man who would like to be God and create Italians in his own image. Since they are made otherwise he has tried to remake them, transfusing into their veins some of the surging spirit that drives their Duce to his goals.

A man of quick resentments, he has tried to instill hatreds in the amiable Italian people against whatever enemy he chooses for them to fight. So it was that in 1935, Mussolini shot hatred into the souls of the Italians, as a corollary stimulant to the injection of imperialism.

It was a dose of hatred of the British Empire. For the object of his own hatred, Mussolini had the British foreign secretary, Anthony Eden. The gentleman of Eton and Oxford represented the diplomacy that tried to stand in the way of Fascist imperialism.

Mussolini, in diplomacy, was Bismarckian. He was aggressive, relentless, far-sighted. With extraordinary executive capacity he organized a campaign and carried it out regardless of opposition.

In the foreign minister of France, Pierre Laval, the Duce found little opposition. It is a trait of Laval not to make enemies, but to conciliate when he can. That is the trait of a successful politician.

Knowing this, Mussolini lured Laval to Rome for a settlement of the troublesome Franco-Italian relations, immediately after the Wal-Wal incident which was to serve Mussolini as an excuse for his Ethiopian adventure.

Fighting broke out at Wal-Wal, an obscure outpost in

Somali territory, October 5, 1934. It was a region of indefinite frontiers, occupied by both Ethiopian and Italian native troops. Rome said sixty native soldiers were killed and forty wounded. It sent reinforcements and planes to rout the Ethiopian "raiders." Haile Selassie's government said the frontier tribes were merely looking for water for their cattle but amends would be made. A dispute developed as to whether Wal-Wal was in Ethiopian or Italian territory. Ethiopia, in January, 1935, appealed to the League of Nations to settle it.

Mussolini had the grievance with which to confront the world. He only needed to have his hands free in a Europe which already was worrying about war.

Laval arrived in Rome early in January. Mussolini received him cordially in his huge Mappamondo office in his Palazzo Venezia and immediately they came to terms on a Franco-Italian treaty of friendship.

Italy agreed not only to support Austrian independence against Germany, but to support France if she were threatened by the arms Hitler had begun to make in violation of the peace treaties.

In return, France agreed to an extension of Italian nationality rights for those born in Tunisia of Italian origins, ceded a small strip of desert adjoining Libya, another adjoining French Somaliland, gave Italy a 1.5 per cent ownership in the French railway from Djibouti to Addis Ababa. That was not much. Mussolini accepted it, he explained later, only because Laval promised Italy a free hand in Ethiopia. That was the OK that Mussolini wanted.

The rest of the world was not ready for war, but Fascism was.

"Fascism believes neither in the possibility nor the utility of perpetual peace," Mussolini wrote for *International Conciliation*, the organ of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"It thus repudiates the doctrine of pacifism . . . War alone

brings up to the highest tension all human energy and puts the stamp of nobility upon the peoples who have the courage to meet it."

The British, meanwhile, were satisfied because they thought the Franco-Italian pact would help them reopen the disarmament discussions at Geneva. The Japanese had abrogated the Washington naval treaty with its 5-5-3 ratio of strength among the United States, Great Britain, and Japan. The Japanese wanted naval parity. Germany's rearmament was shown in increased activity of the Reich's munition plants.

Foreign observers cited the continuing economic crisis as a justification of Italy's need for territorial expansion. Ethiopia seemed to offer great possibilities for the growth of cotton and perhaps for the mining of minerals. They thought Italy would accept economic concessions for the development of Ethiopia's resources.

But in February, Italian troops created another incident by attacking the Ethiopians at Afdub. Mussolini began mobilizing men.

Those who were in Rome at the time tell me that the army was opposed, at first, to Mussolini's plan to conquer Ethiopia by arms. General Badoglio, who was chief of staff in 1934, was supposed to have said, "So long as I am chief of staff, I shall oppose that mad scheme." Badoglio was eventually to carry it out.

Even in 1935 the generals thought the Army should stand ready in Italy to keep the Germans out of Austria and that Italy could get concessions from Ethiopia without fighting for them.

The question of Austria's independence was acute ever since the Nazis on July 25, 1934, mortally wounded the tiny chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuss, in a raid on his office in Vienna. The attempted coup had failed, partly because Mussolini sent 40,000 picked troops and an air force to the border at the Brenner Pass. He had been Hitler's host earlier in the year and

knew the rival dictator was not yet ready for war. By his show of force at the crucial moment, Mussolini had easily enhanced his prestige at home and abroad.

Still he could not afford to have the Germans on the Brenner, people said. The German population of Italy's Upper Adige province in the South Tyrol might revolt.

Hitler added to the uneasiness in March, 1935, by announcing the conscription of a new German army. Italy joined France and Great Britain in notes of protest to Berlin.

Italy's note, written while Mussolini was preparing to violate treaties respecting Ethiopia, said that Italy, "in the eventual future negotiations, cannot simply accept as situations of fact those determined by unilateral decision which annul the undertakings of international character."

European diplomacy became feverish. The three powers decided to hold a conference at Stresa, without inviting Germany to send a representative.

The British foreign secretary, Sir John Simon, and the Lord Privy Seal, Anthony Eden, went to Berlin, where Hitler refused to compromise. He told them that Soviet Russia was arming itself with weapons which threatened Germany. Eden went on to Moscow, where the foreign commissar, Maxim Litvinoff, told him Germany was the one preparing to attack.

I accompanied Flandin and Laval from Paris to Stresa. As the French special raced across France toward Switzerland and Italy we watched the statesmen eat lunch.

Flandin, the tall premier with the appearance and bearing of an English businessman, wore a gray suit that might have been made in London with an ease that might have been British. His table manners also were correct.

Laval traveled in a black suit that would have identified him anywhere as a French officeholder. With this he wore white spats and the white bow tie that was his personal trade-mark. On his head he wore a black beret.

While Flandin ate and listened, Laval talked and forked food

between his teeth simultaneously. He was in happy spirits, judging from the smile on his dark face, for he was going back to meet Mussolini again in the role of a good friend of Italy which he had adopted after the January visit.

Mussolini, in the gray uniform and black shirt of the Fascist Militia, stood sternly on the platform as our train pulled to a slow stop in the Stresa station. Then, as a military guard of honor presented arms and the band played the "Marseillaise" followed by the "Giovinezza," the Duce stepped forward, turned on the sudden charm of his smile and shook hands, first with Flandin, then with Laval.

What space on the small platform was not occupied by the military was patrolled by Fascist detectives and agents of the secret police. We were funneled through them to motor cars that took us to our hotels, the official delegation to one, the correspondents to another beside it.

Mussolini's car took him to the lake, and a speed launch roared him over to the island palace of the Borromeo princes where Napoleon once stayed.

The British arrived the next day, headed by Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald and his foreign secretary, Sir John Simon. Eden was ill and could not come to report on his trip to Warsaw and Moscow. The Duce repeated his reception formula, with the only exception that this time the band played "God Save the King" before going into "Giovinezza."

For the next two days we sat in our hotel and speculated. The conference was a secret one, we found. Every morning Mussolini's guests were whisked by motorboat to the island and every night brought back. The correspondents were left behind. We could hardly move about the village, so thick were the forces of troops and police guarding Stresa. There must have been ten thousand of them, far outnumbering the townspeople. Every morning we were awakened at 6 o'clock by the "crash, crash" of the soldiers' boots as they marched in the graveled avenue in front of the hotel.

The conference ended Sunday, April 14, with a long joint resolution. In it, Mussolini, MacDonald, and Flandin stated that collective security through the League of Nations still was their watchword. They reaffirmed a desire for limitation of armaments. They had agreed to censure Germany's rearming in violation of the Versailles treaty.

"But what about Ethiopia?" we asked. Both the French and British delegations expressed the opinion that the dispute between Italy and Ethiopia could be settled amicably by an arbitration commission sitting in a neutral state. After all, Italy had signed a treaty of friendship and arbitration with Ethiopia in 1928, after sponsoring Ethiopia's admission to the League of Nations.

While the statesmen were in conference Saturday, Italy had informed the League of its willingness to deal with its Ethiopian relations through a conciliation commission. Perhaps Mussolini's guests thought he meant to follow that procedure. Perhaps they were fooled by Machiavellian cunning and duplicity.

Many of us wondered afterward if Laval told Simon that France had promised Italy a free hand in Ethiopia when he saw Mussolini in January, or whether he held back that all-important item, if it was true.

From Stresa we all went to Geneva for the epilogue.

Monday at Geneva was devoted to the usual secret caucuses in which everything was fixed up in cut-and-dried fashion before it was brought to the floor of the League.

The next day Laval presented a French resolution to the League council as a joint product of the Stresa conference, with British and Italian support. It condemned treaty violators and provided action against them in the future by the application of political, economic, and financial sanctions under the League covenant. The council by unanimous vote, with Denmark abstaining, adopted the resolution denouncing German rearmament, and appointed a commission of thirteen to

devise measures to make the covenant more effective and to define the sanctions for the punishment of future violations.

The German press was furious. Hitler went to Munich to confer with his foreign minister, Baron von Neurath, and Nazi party leaders, then sent a circular note, protesting the action, to the thirteen powers which voted the resolution.

Mussolini, meanwhile, had flown back to Rome, satisfied with his work at Stresa. He had only to wait for the rainy season to end before giving the order to attack Ethiopia.

As soon as Haile Selassie accepted Italy's proposal for a commission of conciliation Italy made fresh charges of banditry against its consulates.

Mussolini had sprinkled consulates throughout Ethiopia to form a network of espionage. In 1932 he had called to Rome Colonel Vittorio Ruggero, military attaché of the Italian legation at Addis Ababa, who possessed an exceptional knowledge of Ethiopia and its dialects. He sent Ruggero back with cases full of big, silver Maria Theresa thalers, the money of Ethiopia which was coined in Austria, to buy up malcontent chieftains. Italy had practically no trade in Ethiopia, but the consulates sprang up. Through them Ruggero bought the chieftains.

In Italy one class after another of army reservists was called to the colors until the barracks and cantonments were filled with men to replace those that were being sent to Africa. An army corps stationed at Verona was transferred to Bolzano on the Austrian border to reinforce the watch there. Mussolini sent seventy-five thousand workmen to the East African colonies, Eritrea and Somaliland, to build military roads. Privately, Mussolini told the 69-year-old De Bono that he would be in command of the Ethiopian invasion. General Badoglio had never joined the Fascist party. De Bono was one of those who led the March on Rome. The Ethiopian campaign was to be a Blackshirt war.

Mussolini let the world know that he meant war in a speech to the Italian Chamber of Deputies in May.

With Ethiopia "in her present state and mood," he said, he was taking "certain precautionary measures."

"Let everyone keep well in mind that when there is a question of the security of our territories and the lives of our soldiers we are ready to assume all, even the supreme, responsibilities," he added.

As for Germany's rearmament, he was already beginning to accept it as an "accomplished fact" that was "irrevocable."

"To make recriminations is useless, even as it is useless to speak any longer about disarmament," Mussolini said.

Mussolini, unlike the democratic statesmen of Europe, had no illusions.

In France, Flandin resigned when the Chamber of Deputies, with gold flowing out of the country in a frightening stream, refused him full powers to take financial measures to defend the franc. Laval formed a cabinet June 6 and obtained the emergency powers which had been denied to his predecessor. With the Left and Right still brawling in France, and Laval at the head of the government, Mussolini had nothing to fear on his continental frontier.

Mussolini still had to work on his own people to imbue them with the warrior spirit. He proclaimed the Sabato Fascista, the Fascist Saturday. It was the Saturday half-holiday of the British and American week end, adapted to Fascist purposes. The free hours of the workers and employees were at the disposal of Fascist organizations for military preparations, mainly drilling. It was unpopular with the small shopkeepers and young workers, who would have preferred the time off for recreation, but they knew better than to complain.

Then a British bombshell exploded among the big powers. It was the Anglo-German naval agreement, signed by the new

British foreign secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, and Hitler's special envoy to London, Joachim von Ribbentrop. It gave Germany the right to build up to 35 per cent of the British naval tonnage and 45 per cent of the British submarine tonnage.

France was so alarmed that Eden, the traveling salesman of British diplomacy, had to go to Paris to conciliate the French. While he was explaining the treaty he might as well carry proposals on to Rome for the settlement of the Ethiopian dispute without resort to arms.

Troopships were sailing almost daily for Africa. The Italians let it be understood that they wanted a mandate over Ethiopia which would make that country a protectorate under Italian control.

Eden arrived in Rome June 23 and the next day had three talks with Mussolini. Correspondents heard that the Duce put Eden on the defensive by decrying the Anglo-German naval pact as contrary to the Anglo-French declaration and the Stresa agreement.

Then Mussolini sat back and listened to Eden. He listened with apparent comprehension until Eden brought up the subject of Ethiopia and outlined what he was authorized to suggest.

Mussolini sternly rejected all of it. He demanded: (1) Facilities for developing Ethiopia's natural resources and colonizing its more fertile regions; (2) establishment of an Italian administration at Addis Ababa; (3) Italian control of Ethiopia's foreign policy, as a condition for allowing Haile Selassie to remain as the nominal head of the country.

Eden left Mussolini long enough to communicate with London and brought back the following suggestions: (1) A concession for Italian colonization in Ogaden; (2) permission for Italy to build a modern highway from Massawa, its Eritrean port, through a corridor across Ethiopia to Moga-

discio, Italy's Somaliland port. Ethiopia would be compensated with a strip of arid land to Zeila on the coast of British Somaliland.

What happened then has never been fully divulged. But Mussolini, the self-made man who was repelled by the cool, carefully dressed product of Oxford that faced him, angrily rejected the whole British plan. They parted frigidly. To Ward Price, of the London *Daily Mail*, Mussolini said bluntly that he was "no collector of deserts."

Within a few days the Italian press was wild at Great Britain's "absurd, ridiculous, selfish, tricky, hypocritical policy." From then on, the propagandists dinned at the Italians that the British were determined to keep poor Italy out of its place in the sun because they wanted Ethiopia for their own Empire.

Some observers believe that this propaganda, playing on the Italians' feeling of international persecution, did more than anything else to popularize the Ethiopian war.

The older Italians had little relish for a war 2500 miles away, especially after the disastrous campaign of 1896, with the humiliating defeat at Aduwa. These Mussolini ignored, however. Younger men were to fight the war, men who had been reared under Fascism. The youth was organized in a system of compulsory premilitary training. For the young men were the parades and speeches that pictured Ethiopia as an Eldorado of cotton, gold, and possibly oil that others coveted.

Mussolini, when he wanted to put over an unpopular policy, made a show of "getting close to the people." That summer he went out in a field and there, with bare torso, went through the motions of threshing wheat, surrounded by his secret police disguised as peasants. His propaganda service saw that all the papers published the photograph.

Mussolini was confident that nobody abroad could stop

him. In August, while shiploads of troops streamed through the Suez Canal, one of them carrying his sons, Vittorio and Bruno, and his son-in-law, Count Galeazzo Ciano, the Duce watched 500,000 soldiers go through the summer maneuvers at Bolzano, near the Brenner Pass. France was reassured that Italy was defending Austria against the Nazis.

At Stresa it was impossible to sample what the Italian public thought privately of the Ethiopian campaign. But colleagues in Rome reported two moods among the people, ardor and acquiescence.

Mussolini gave his orchestrated propaganda services a tune of Roman grandeur to play. In newspapers, over the radio, in the movie houses, Italians were reminded of the power and the glory that were Rome when its legions dominated the world from the Rhine to the Nile and from the moors of Scotland to the mountains of India. Maps of the Roman Empire at various stages in its history were set up throughout Italy.

The will to revive Rome's grandeur that Mussolini urged on his people took root among many of the boys who had grown up in the dynamism of Fascism. Many others had no craving for the heroic role of fighting blacks in Africa.

As their sons marched to the piers of ports in new boots from the Prague factory of Bata and crowded the decks of eastward-bound ships, many Italians grumbled as they always have and probably always will. They grumbled at the rising cost of living from the new tax on business turnover. They grumbled at the necessity of subscribing to a government war loan.

But all Italy accepted the command to march toward greater glory as it had accepted every other command of Mussolini.

Posters on the walls of every Italian city proclaimed that "in Africa there is space and glory for everybody." De Bono started the drive for both on October 2. His army invaded

Ethiopia in the neighborhood of Assab, near the junction of the frontiers between Ethiopia, Eritrea, and French Somaliland.

In Italy, Fascism mobilized all the millions of Italians, soldiers and civilians, who remained at home. They were ordered into the public squares in a great mass meeting intended to demonstrate the national will to fight any opposition.

The other powers decided, through the League of Nations, to withhold loans from Italy in a credit blockade. Mussolini offset that by compelling Italians to trade their securities held abroad to the government for treasury bonds. The government then was able to sell the foreign securities for the cash to pay for the war.

Italians tasted their first glory October 13, when De Bono officially took possession of Aduwa for Italy. It was the glory of revenge. At Aduwa the Abyssinians in 1896 had beaten an Italian army in a stinging defeat that was the last depth of humiliation. De Bono had settled an old score before devoting himself to the conquering of space.

At Geneva the next day, fifty-two European governments agreed on economic sanctions against Italy. British statesmen had been dismayed when Laval refused to consider military sanctions. Now they hoped to halt the war by cutting off Italy's supplies. Germany and Japan stayed "neutral," meaning they would help rather than hinder Italy. Germany was rearming for aggressions to come, Japan was already fighting a war against China.

The sanctions voted at Geneva were an experiment. Great Britain and France wanted to see whether they could be used later against Germany.

Their immediate effect was to infuriate the hypersensitive Italians, who considered them an insult. The Italians bristled with resentment against Laval for his failure to keep France from joining Britain in imposing the sanctions. But Britain was the main object of their indignation.

The British ambassador, then Sir Eric Drummond, and Lady Drummond were ostracized by Rome society. British goods were boycotted. Fascists staged anti-British demonstrations in the streets.

The British and French governments were alarmed. They felt they must try to placate Mussolini and to save the face of the League of Nations, which Japan, Germany, and now Italy, had defied with scorn.

The moment seemed propitious, for the warriors of the Negus had fought De Bono's army to a standstill and it faced a possible defeat. Laval had heard from the French embassy at Rome that Mussolini was worried at the prospect of failure, something no dictator can ever admit.

Laval therefore invited Sir Samuel Hoare to meet him in Paris to explore the possibilities of appeasing Mussolini with concessions which would be asked of Haile Selassie. Hoare assumed the casual air of a man who only wanted to see two of his friends settle a quarrel and "stopped off" in Paris, December 8, on a holiday trip to Switzerland.

A large group of American, British, and Italian correspondents stood in the courtyard of the Quai d'Orsay all that Sunday from ten in the morning until six-thirty in the evening while the two foreign ministers composed a plan.

It was intended to be a secret plan until the Duce and the Negus had a chance to study it. Hoare cautioned us against speculating on its terms. He said its details were of no importance to anybody but the people immediately concerned, that is to say, the Italians and the Ethiopians.

Laval was more outspoken. Leaning back in the padded-leather chair behind his desk he blandly told correspondents that if he were in Mussolini's place he would accept the basis of settlement that he proposed and would be glad to do so.

Laval's own collaborators in the Quai d'Orsay thought so too. In fact, they thought he and Hoare were offering Mussolini far too much. They promptly sabotaged the plan by giving

it publicity to the democratic world, which they knew would be indignant.

They obviously could not go over the head of their foreign minister to do this. Instead, they adopted a simple French trick of letting the main lines of the plan leak out.

A French journalist who was known among the correspondents as an able and reliable fellow was taken into one of the many offices of the Foreign Ministry. Soon he came out and stopped to speak casually with those of us who had remained in the hope of picking up a tip on the peace plan. Casually he told us what the plan was. Within a few minutes it was in the newspaper offices of New York and London.

Italy was offered almost half of Ethiopia. It was to have Danakil and Italian-occupied territory in Tigre, excepting the holy city of Aksum in the north and Ogaden, Bale, and Boran provinces in the south. Ethiopia was to get the Italian port of Assab and a corridor leading to it.

There was an immediate storm of moral indignation in the labor circles of Great Britain and France over the "international chicanery" that shook the Baldwin and Laval governments to their foundations. The small nations of Europe, fearful that they some day might be attacked, opposed a plan that "placed a premium on aggression."

The Fascist press at first was optimistic about the plan, meaning that Mussolini was considering it. But the Roman dictator decided he could not risk the effect on his prestige of a compromise, especially when it would not even gain him good will abroad. So he rejected it, as the Ethiopians did.

It has always seemed to me that the British government of the time was not entirely blameless in the Ethiopian affair, not to mention the government of France. I incline to the widely shared belief that Britain could have prevented the invasion of Ethiopia with firmness alone early in 1935, before Italy was committed to the venture.

Mussolini was well aware that Great Britain and France,

as well as Italy, had their eyes on Ethiopia as a possible zone of influence. Italy appears to have consulted the other two interested powers. There has been no denial, so far as I know, that Grandi told the British early in 1935 that Italy intended to act and reminded them later that there was no reply.

Laval's deal with Mussolini put the British foreign office on guard, but it did nothing and said nothing, until it was too late. Laval having given the green light, the Italians interpreted the British silence as consent.

When the Germans had not yet displayed the full might of their newly forged armaments, Mussolini showed that he despised Hitler. The Stresa conference put Italy on record as aligned with Great Britain and France against the German rearmament.

Yet the Allies let Italy slip away from them. The Hoare plan was no help to them in the effort to regain the amity of Rome. Its repudiation, after Mussolini had given the French ambassador, Count de Chambrun, his tentative acceptance, so angered the Duce that he was left with a state of mind which eventually turned him to Hitler.

The public indignation in England forced Hoare to resign. Anthony Eden led the attack on him in parliament and was called to succeed him as foreign secretary. Laval stayed in office in France by letting the whole matter drop.

The British then considered the advisability of stopping Mussolini by cutting off the oil supplies vital to his bombing planes and his army that moved by motor truck over the roads which the Italians were building ahead of their advance.

At that, the Duce resorted to the force which had been effective in the past. He threatened that Italy would fight the country that applied oil sanctions.

Laval was blamed more than anybody else for the failure of the British to accept the challenge and apply an oil blockade. He refused to co-operate in the only sanctions that would have hurt the Italians. Laval was more apprehensive about a

European war than anything else. So, too, was King Leopold III of Belgium. Leopold went to London and warned the British royal family that the fall of Fascism would mean the fall of the Italian monarchy. The Baldwin government backed down.

But Mussolini's government, nevertheless, was in a tough spot. The Duce had to win a quick victory in Ethiopia because British public opinion was warming to a heat of indignation that might force England to fight Italy. The Ethiopian campaign was lagging. Something had to be done about it.

The elderly De Bono had blundered, Mussolini was convinced. De Bono was a politician rather than a soldier. Not only that, but he was suspected of wanting a long war, one of two or three years, which would make him and a few of his Fascist pals very rich out of the graft that was rampant in the service of supplies.

Correspondents who were in Ethiopia said the graft there was terrific. Airplanes and motor trucks that the government paid for never arrived. And the graft was bad for the morale of the troops.

Furthermore, De Bono had shown himself to be an incompetent general. De Bono, as colonial administrator, had prepared the way. He had enlisted the support of many native chiefs and their men. Many had "made their obedience" to him, but suddenly some of them rose at night and started what looked like a massacre of Italian troops. Other Italian forces came to the rescue and in a few days the situation was clear again.

But De Bono had not bothered to train his men for the difficult Ethiopian terrain of mountains and deserts. He was apparently relying on the belief that as fighters the Ethiopians were pushovers, and on the report of Count Dino Grandi, the Italian ambassador at London, that the British were so pacifist and their government so cowardly that no opposition was to be feared.

In September, just before the Italians invaded Ethiopia, the British Home Fleet had steamed to Alexandria. Then the British had decided to try the economic sanctions, rather than naval warfare in the Mediterranean, to halt the invasion. They had tried diplomacy. The sanctions were a joke and diplomacy had failed. British public opinion, led by Winston Churchill, David Lloyd George, and Anthony Eden, was insisting that the British Fleet close the Suez Canal to the Italian troop and supply ships.

The British already were training the Ethiopians and supplying them with arms. If the war lasted longer than six months the rains would come, and the black warriors might become such proficient guerrilla fighters that they would no longer be pushovers.

Mussolini decided on more vigorous warfare, discarding the idea of winning the Ethiopians through money and promises, and De Bono's plan for two seasonal campaigns. His army chief of staff, Marshal Badoglio, had gone to the Ethiopian front at the outset of the war, then had returned to Rome. Mussolini summoned Badoglio and gave him full charge.

Badoglio was a friend of the king and trusted him, but he insisted that the king also personally promise not to interfere. Probably Badoglio wanted to prevent Mussolini's use of the king later for a tightening of the reins. Badoglio went to Ethiopia to replace De Bono.

While the European situation remained tense, with Britain and France exchanging reciprocal guarantees of armed support in event of an attack by Italy, Badoglio quickened the tempo and the marching and fighting in Ethiopia.

Against a primitive people Badoglio applied a primitive rule of warfare. His tactics were to drive the Ethiopians into a concentration and make them fight a pitched battle, in which they would be at a woeful disadvantage under the attack of Italian planes, artillery, and machine guns.

Much has been made abroad of the Italian use of poison gas against the Ethiopians. Certain military and journalistic observers insist that Badoglio never won a decisive action because of it. Some experiments were made in the firing of gas shells, they say, but for the most part the Italians confined their chemical warfare to the spreading of mustard gas over empty areas in the Tembien and other northern regions of mountains and forests to prevent the Ethiopians from taking refuge there. It was from those regions that the blacks appeared with their bare feet blistered.

It took only a few months for Badoglio's tactics to show effect. In the spring he sucked the Ethiopians into the big battle of Amba Alagi, where they were butchered in what was to be the decisive battle of the war. Soon the Italian columns everywhere had routed the primitive warriors of the Negus and were pressing on Addis Ababa. Badoglio led his men into the Ethiopian capital May 5. Haile Selassie fled in a British warship.

The war was over and Italy was wild with joy and the glory of conquest. Sanctions had rallied the people of Italy around the Duce, who had staged a demonstration of loyalty toward him and of faith in the war. He had Italian women contribute their gold wedding rings to the country's war chest in a public ceremony January 5. In Rome the tall and stately Queen Elena led the procession to the "altar of the nation," the huge white monument to Italy's unity facing the Piazza Venezia, and there dropped her ring in an urn.

With the confidence of a successful war lord, therefore, Mussolini ordered the people to assemble in the public squares the night of May 9. It was ten-thirty when the Duce appeared on his balcony in Rome, with a floodlight shining on him. Trumpets sounded and a salute of twenty-one guns.

With a motion of his arm, the Duce stilled 400,000 men, women, children, and soldiers who were shouting, singing, and cheering. He proclaimed the rebirth of the Roman Empire.

"Raise up your banners, stretch forth your arms, lift up your hearts," he shouted, "and sing to the Empire which appears in being, after fifteen centuries, on the fateful hills of Rome."

The crowd was hysterical with joy. Mussolini had wiped out the Italian's feeling of inferiority. For more than two generations, ever since the unification of Italy in 1870, its statesmen had dreamed vainly of acting independently. They were always at the mercy of Great Britain, France, and Germany. Mussolini had successfully defied the other governments. He had won the Ethiopian war against the British Empire, France, and the League of Nations. For all that, he was popular. He had, in fact, reached the height of his popularity that night of May 9, 1936.

Italy had won a war by itself. Italians had satisfied their craving for greatness. If Mussolini had stopped there, he could have become a god, perhaps, like the Roman Emperors of old. But Mussolini was not satisfied.

VI

Spanish Adventure

Shortly after Badoglio's army crushed the Ethiopians in the devastating defeat of Amba Alagi, in the spring of 1936, the Spanish military attaché in Rome, Major Manuel Villegas, called on Lieutenant Colonel Mario Roatta, chief of the Italian military intelligence service. He had come, he said, on a delicate and confidential mission.

Colonel Roatta was aware, of course, of the political situation in Spain. The young republic had become alarmingly red. The Leftist government was seeking to Bolshevize Spain. It was trying to weaken the army by retiring many of the generals and transferring others to posts in Morocco and the Canary Islands to get them out of the way.

Across the Pyrenees, in France, was a menacing situation. The Leftists were getting the upper hand there too. The Socialists and Communists were solidifying and organizing their forces in a Popular Front against the pro-Fascist Nationalists. They were winning out in the fighting between the parties of the Left and the Right.

Army leaders in Spain were greatly concerned with the state of affairs. They felt something should be done about it and they were preparing to safeguard the peace and order of Spain, if necessary by taking control of the government. The Spanish officer mentioned the name of General Francisco Franco as the prospective leader of the revolt. He would like to make a proposal.

For the revolt to be successful, Franco needed ships to transport an army from Morocco to the Spanish mainland. He

might need arms and he might need men. Certainly he must have planes. Would Italy be willing to lend such aid as it could to this movement to keep Bolshevism out of the Mediterranean and give Spain an authoritarian regime?

Roatta said he would communicate immediately with his superiors and let the officer know the Duce's reply.

This is a story told me much later by a diplomat who was watching Italian affairs closely at the time. I believe it to be true. Major Villegas and Captain Rafael Estrada, Spanish naval attaché, incidentally, resigned their posts in July, 1936, telegraphing to Franco that they did not wish to continue serving "the pseudo government of Madrid." In August they raided the Spanish embassy and, with drawn pistols, forced the ambassador to sign his own resignation. Villegas returned to office that winter as Franco's military attaché in Rome, with a promotion to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Whatever the circumstances Franco's proposal got to Mussolini. A similar one was made to Hitler.

The Spanish generals knew that Mussolini and Hitler were negotiating a rapprochement between Italy and Germany. They were understood to have agreed in principle on German penetration in Austria. Mussolini's diplomatic policy, in so far as it was known publicly, was still one of defending Austria's independence.

What the world did not yet know was that Mussolini was already in the diplomatic clutches of Hitler. The Nazi Fuehrer had sent his troops into the remilitarized Rhineland zone March 7 on the pretense that Germany was no longer bound by the Locarno pact since a new defensive pact between the French and Soviet Russian governments had already violated it.

Drunk with his dream of empire, Mussolini wanted absolute control of the Mediterranean and Africa. He longed for naval parity with the French, freedom from British control of "Italy's sea," he coveted Malta, Tunis, Corsica, anything

he could get. He hoped to gather, as satellites, Hungary, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Turkey, and Greece. He wanted to hold the balance of power on the continent, thereby attaining relative freedom of action for Italy.

But Italy's triumph over the democratic powers on the issue of Ethiopia had given Hitler the sign of their vacillation and the ineffectiveness of League sanctions which was all he needed to bring into the open his growing German might, to take the initiative out of the hands of others. Mussolini had to take Hitler into consideration. If Hitler sent aid to the Spanish generals, Mussolini also must do so, to protect his Mediterranean interests. It has always been one of Mussolini's tenets that you get nothing out of the fighting unless you take part in it.

Furthermore, Mussolini was still sore at the British because of the sanctions.

He sent word to the Spanish generals, therefore, of his willingness to aid them. It could only be done, however, after the fall of Addis Ababa and the end to the operations in Ethiopia. Then he would have men and arms available.

The Duce, in the meantime, devoted himself to problems at home. Foremost was the problem of making Italy economically self-sufficient, so that never again would it have to suffer privations in wartime because other nations cut off its supplies from abroad.

Mussolini made autarchy, therefore, the goal of his corporate state. He remodeled the corporate system to give law-making, price-fixing, and competition regulating powers to twenty-two corporations or guilds, representing industry, commerce, agriculture, credit and insurance, and the professions.

From then on, Italy was to have a strictly national economy, with little regard for foreign trade. "Autoregulation of business" was incorporated in the state. Property was private in name only, for its uses were determined at every turn by

corporate controls set up by the government in the Ministry of Corporations.

Mussolini's next announcement was the suppression of the Chamber of Deputies. It had long since become a puppet show to rubber-stamp the decrees of the Duce. It would be replaced, Mussolini announced, with a national assembly of corporations, a body which was to become known as the Chamber of Fasces and Guilds, composed of the Fascist hierarchy and representatives of the Fascist guilds—in short, a thoroughly Fascist Chamber.

A minor but perennial problem was the opposition to the Fascist regime. There were still Italians who thought personal and civic freedom was too high a price to pay, even for an empire. Ten intellectuals in Piedmont were arrested on charges of forming an association to overthrow the state. Seven were convicted and sent to the islands, three were acquitted. Five officials of the Ministry of Finance were arrested for Masonic activity. Six Tyroleans from the Upper Adige were deported to southern Italy to break up a movement for the return to Austria of that German-language region.

Some time after Mussolini's proclamation of the empire, Villegas, through the War Ministry, completed the arrangements for Italian intervention in the civil war that was soon to stain the Iberian peninsula with the blood of its people.

The Duce had material for the anti-Bolshevik propaganda, not only in Spain, but in France. The Popular Front in France had won the elections, with a majority for the Socialists. The workers immediately occupied their factories in sit-down strikes, hoisting the red flag on smokestacks as the Socialists of Italy had done in 1920. In France the workers were striking to bring pressure on the new Popular Front anti-Fascist government of the Socialist premier-designate, Léon Blum, for social reforms and the dissolution of such nationalist organizations as the Croix de Feu, the Jeunesses

Patriotes, the Solidarité Française and the Francistes. There were frequent clashes between the opposing elements.

The Duce began his preparations for Italy's new war venture. The directorate of the Fascist party decided to enroll all the party's members, numbering more than two million, who were between the ages of 21 and 55, in the militia. That meant that they were subject to call for military service.

The government radio station at Bari began broadcasting anti-British propaganda to Egypt and Palestine.

Badoglio was created Duke of Addis Ababa by King Vittorio Emanuele, who had assumed the title of Emperor of Ethiopia. The marshal was put to work reorganizing the armed forces.

Of greater significance was a visit of five hundred Italians, including Mussolini's daughter, Countess Edda Ciano, to Berlin. Up to then, Ciano had been Italy's first minister of propaganda. He was transferred to the Foreign Office as minister. That was in June.

Some observers attributed the new alliance of Italy with Germany to the influence which the blonde Edda exercised over her father. This would exaggerate Edda's importance in political affairs. She enjoys the particular affection and confidence of her father, it is true, and she is intelligent. But it is doubtful if she has ever given much concern to politics.

Her fondness for a good time is exceeded only by that of her husband. She has always liked good-looking young men. He has always liked good-looking girls.

They met in Rome in the nineteen-twenties. They became engaged in Shanghai when Ciano was a vice-consul in the Italian diplomatic service and Edda was visiting the Far East. Edda found Galeazzo personable, affable, well-mannered, titled, and fairly well-to-do. They arranged their marriage.

It was a good match. Ciano was aware that not every young man was eligible to become the son-in-law of a dictator. He considered himself particularly qualified because he was the

only son of a Fascist hero, Admiral Count Costanzo Ciano, who commanded a daring mosquito boat raid against the Austrian fleet in Zara harbor in the First World War. Nothing much was accomplished by the raid, but its audacity made the elder Ciano a naval hero.

Galeazzo was smart and ambitious. He decided, therefore, to become the Duce's son-in-law and worked to that end. After a few years of obscure journalism on a small newspaper Ciano entered the fashionable and socially agreeable career of diplomacy. He arranged to ingratiate himself with Edda Mussolini.

After their marriage in 1930, Ciano's rise was meteoric. By 1936 he had jumped all the way up the diplomatic ranks from vice-consul to ambassador. The speed with which his father-in-law advanced him is indicated by the fact that in May, 1936, Ciano was promoted from major to colonel in the Fascist militia and five months later was promoted to general.

His fortune also was growing. The Ciano family were ship operators at Leghorn. As soon as Mussolini let his son-in-law know there would be an Ethiopian war, the Cianos bought up all the available bottoms in Italy and converted the vessels into troopships, which they chartered to the government at rates which were, to say the least, profitable.

Edda, meanwhile, had three children, remained chic and clever, and liked to be surrounded by handsome young men. Some persons said she was tubercular, others merely that her "lungs were weak." At any rate, she lived much of the time on the island of Capri, off Naples.

The Cianos inaugurated Italy's new foreign policy of strong friendship for the Reich, Edda in Berlin, Galeazzo in Rome. They forged the Rome-Berlin Axis. Rumors were heard immediately of an Italo-German deal to turn Austria over to the Nazis, who were letting off stink bombs at political meetings and conducting generally a campaign of terrorism there.

This was probably the most important moment in all of Fascism's diplomatic history. That June, Italy became a virtual ally of Germany for the Spanish war and the greater one to come.

Franco was all set for his revolt. He only needed an incident to set off the bomb. The Spanish Leftists provided it in the assassination of the Rightist deputy and financial expert, Calvo Sotelo, in July.

In a plane, chartered in London by Luis Antonio Bolin, correspondent of the Madrid monarchist newspaper, *ABC*, and flown to the Canaries, Franco flew to Morocco, took command of an army rebellion that broke out at Tetuan, July 18, and the next day landed with rebel troops at Cadiz. The ships that transported Franco and his troops from Morocco to the mainland were Italian.

Italy sent twenty-four planes to Franco as the first allotment of arms. Hitler also sent planes. The sample war was on, in which the two dictators were to test their arms, men, and tactics in actual combat on a Spanish battlefield before they used them in World War II.

Within a month, the first Italian Blackshirt militiamen, the so-called volunteers, were in Spain. On August 20, the French ambassador, Count de Chambrun, saw Count Ciano, categorically pledged that France would not intervene in the Spanish war, and asked Italy to withdraw its support of Franco. Instead, Italy's aid was intensified.

The Rome-Berlin Axis was functioning. Mussolini had given way completely to Hitler on Austria. The Austrian chancellor, Schuschnigg, found that out when he conferred with the Duce in June. At Mussolini's urging, Schuschnigg finally accepted a pact with Germany which called Austria a German state, guaranteed its independence, but gave the Austrian Nazis who were Hitler's fifth columnists posts in the Vienna cabinet.

At the army maneuvers that summer Mussolini told the

troops and the world that Italy could mobilize "eight million bayonets." But he did not mean that Italy would mobilize any for the defense of Austria, as it had in 1934.

It was not long before Ciano went to Berchtesgaden to see Hitler and then told Schuschnigg that Austria's absorption by Germany was inevitable.

The story of the Spanish war, of the Russian aid to the loyal forces of the Madrid government, of the nonintervention farce solemnly played out by the democracies, is too fresh and too long to be retold here, except to emphasize the importance of Italian aid to Franco.

In the fall of 1936, Italian infantry troops were landing in southern Spain for training behind the lines until there were enough of them to make an offensive on the Madrid front.

In January troops were landing daily at Cadiz to be rushed to Seville for an offensive on Malaga. That was to be the first test of the new Fascist fighting stock on European soil. When fifteen thousand Italians had been massed in the Seville sector the offensive began. In March the Italian "volunteers" took Malaga.

Some of the Italians were officers and men of the regular army. Others were volunteers in so far as they were troops of Mussolini's "volunteer" militia. Some were hungry peasants, unskilled workers, and men who thought in Italy they were going to Ethiopia to build roads. Many were pressed into the Spanish service. All able-bodied Fascists were liable to service in the "voluntary" militia. It was easy for Blackshirt officials to select likely men in a community and send them the cards that called them to the colors of another nation.

Until the capture of Malaga, Mussolini's press ministry in Rome had steadfastly denied reports of an Italian army in Spain. That was because Italy was making pledges of nonintervention at London. But Fascists are so proud of their military exploits that they cannot refrain from boasting about them, even when the deeds are supposed to be a secret. After

Malaga the first admission of Italian intervention in the Spanish war appeared in the Rome newspapers. With obvious satisfaction they republished foreign reports attributing the capture of the city to the Italian troops.

After the success at Malaga long columns of Italian trucks full of Blackshirt militiamen moved northward to the Madrid front for the offensive against Guadalajara.

The Guadalajara offensive was to be a strictly Italian show. The story of the Italian disaster in the mountains, in which Mussolini's troops fell with frozen hands and feet in a bitter storm under the counterattacks of Madrid's international brigade, is military history. It was a Spanish Caporetto.

Fascism faced a new crisis, this time on foreign soil to which it had been transported. Because a dictator must always win his wars or himself go down in defeat, because Mussolini has said, "He who hesitates is lost," the Duce impressed thousands more of Italy's peasants into his "volunteer" army and shipped them, like convicts, to Spain.

VII

Red, Black, and Brown

Dictators are notoriously devoid of a sense of humor and Mussolini is no exception. If the men who assume the pompous titles of Duce, Fuehrer, and the various other forms of Leader had a sense of humor, they would laugh with their people at the figures they cut and that would be fatal to their power. They must take themselves with solemn seriousness if they wish the public to do the same.

This does not preclude, however, an occasional joke at the expense of somebody else. Mussolini's favorite joke is that of the unidentified airplane or submarine.

Several times in World War II the Italian press has reported with the utmost solemnity that "unidentified airplanes" bombed, or at least flew over Gibraltar, drawing the fire of the British Rock's antiaircraft batteries. The planes, needless to say, were Italian.

In the Spanish war, not only "unidentified" airplanes, but "unidentified" submarines attacked and sometimes sank British and Soviet Russian ships laden with supplies for the Republicans. The Soviet steamer *Timiryiazev* was torpedoed off Algiers at the end of August, 1937. A few days later the Soviet freighter *Blagoev* also was torpedoed in the Mediterranean.

I was in Moscow at the time and it was obvious that the Soviet government also lacked a sense of humor. It failed especially to see the joke in the "unidentified" submarine attacks. The Russians were infuriated, in fact, and promptly identified the submarines as Italian "pirates," with a demand

that they come to the surface and cease their marauding. In a note to Rome the Soviet Foreign Office demanded reparations.

France and Great Britain were also disturbed by the attacks which had been made on their ships. They decided to call a conference at Nyon, Switzerland, September 10. Italy was invited to send a representative. So, too, was Germany, over the protest of Moscow that Germany was not a Mediterranean power.

The conference took place, with both Italy and Germany absent. Italy was offended by the Soviet charges. Count Ciano had rejected the Russian demands and denied that Italian warcraft had anything to do with the attacks. It was a typical Fascist reply, as reliable as the Rome denials early in the Spanish war that Italy was sending aid to Franco.

But even without the aggressor nations, or perhaps because of their absence and the firm stand of the Soviet foreign commissar, Maxim Litvinoff, the conference was a success, a rare thing in the record of European conferences of the past decade. The delegates decided to establish a naval patrol in the Mediterranean, with British and French warships to perform the policing.

The patrol was effective, for the attacks on the merchantmen subsided immediately. To the Soviet diplomats this was a confirmation of their government's attitude that Great Britain, France, and the United States should take a firm stand against "Fascist aggression," meaning at that time the intervention in Spain. They insisted, with reason, that a naval blockade of the rebel-occupied coast would have kept Italian supply ships and troop transports from reaching Franco's ports.

The hard-boiled Russians, unable to get a blockade of the aggressors in Spain, at least could apply one of their own. They cut off their own shipments of oil to Italy.

It is a constant irony of international relations that enemies,

actual or potential, supply one another with the weapons that are to be used against them. The United States for years shipped scrap iron to Japan for the building of a Japanese fleet that would attack Pearl Harbor. Russia supplied Italy with oil for its navy and Italy built warships for Russia

Oil for its navy was, is, and always will be one of Italy's greatest needs. The scantiness of Italian naval glory may be attributed to a shortage of oil more than to any other factor.

In 1933, Fascist Italy, the avowed foe of Bolshevism, signed a treaty of friendship and nonaggression with Bolshevik Russia, the first such pact any power made with the Soviet Union. The main purpose of the treaty was to facilitate trade between the two countries to the benefit of Italy.

The nearest available oil by the cheap sea routes came from the wells in the Soviet Caucasus. Russia was not producing more than enough oil for itself, but it needed warships. Italy, therefore, was able to obtain oil from the Black Sea ports and pay for it by building two cruisers for Russia, one at Leghorn, the other at Leningrad, under the supervision of Italian experts.

But the sinking of Soviet ships by Italian submarines fueled with Russian oil was too much for Moscow. The Kremlin suspended all commercial exchanges with Italy in a complete economic rupture.

The Italians immediately seized the funds which the Soviet government had in a Milan bank to pay for the cruiser the Orlando shipyard in Leghorn was building for the Russian navy. Work on the cruiser was suspended. Eventually the ship was completed and the Soviet embassy at Rome, by paying the full price in cash, was able to send the new cruiser to join her sister ship at Leningrad only six months before World War II broke out in September, 1939.

Italy, incidentally, made a deal with Mexico for oil to replace that which the Russians withheld after the piracy dispute.

Diplomatic relations remained bad between Italy and Russia all through the winter of 1937–1938. Stalin knew that Hitler and Mussolini had taken one another as an ally, for better or for worse, until war should part them.

The honeymoon began with Mussolini's visit to Germany in September, 1937. Unlike Hitler's first trip to Italy it was a carnival of cordiality whose implications did not escape the Russians. They predicted that it would be followed by the German absorption of Austria and probably other raids on the smaller countries of Europe.

It was a spectacle of Axis solidarity to celebrate the fall of Italy into the German camp. The real work was done in January and April, when Goering twice visited Rome, in May, when Baron von Neurath went there, and in June, when Marshal von Blomberg wound up the series of trips. They had won Mussolini to a plan for all-out collaboration in the political, military, industrial, economic, and propaganda fields.

Mussolini's trip to Berlin was his reward for giving in to Hitler. He liked flattery, he liked to take a bow before a cheering crowd. It was what he lived for, like applause to an actor. Hitler saw to it that the Duce was not disappointed.

Munich and Berlin were decorated with imperial eagles, giant fasces and black triumphal arches bearing an M for Mussolini in a lavish display of ostentation that a conquering emperor might envy. How happy it made Mussolini was evident in the photographs of his beaming smile as he heard the crowds cheering under the impulsion of the Gestapo and saw little German children waving the Italian flag. To show Mussolini that he was getting a good ally for selling out Austria, Hitler let him see the guns in the Krupp works at Essen.

When Mussolini arrived home he was so happy he made Hitler, the one-time "buffoon," a corporal of honor in the Fascist Militia.

The new alliance took its first outward form in Italy's

adherence to the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern pact in November. Spokesmen of the three powers insisted that the pact was merely an ideological agreement to combat Communism at home. The Soviet government, the most realistic in the world, knew this was bunk. It was an alliance against Russia. The Kremlin, therefore, protested to Italy.

The 1933 Italian-Soviet treaty, in its third paragraph, specified that neither party would participate in any agreement with a third party, directly or indirectly aimed against one of the contracting countries. Moscow said Italy's adherence to the Anti-Comintern pact was a violation of this clause.

The Russians not only fought the Italians in diplomacy and trade, but also waged a propaganda war over the radio waves. It is difficult to say who fired the opening words, but most of the diplomats who listened in and laughed said the Russians started the battle of the broadcasts.

One night they heard an Italian voice broadcast an appeal to Italians to embrace Communism and overthrow the Fascist regime. It said Mussolini should be slain like a mad dog.

A few nights later they heard a Russian voice berate the "bloodthirsty barbarian, Stalin," and advise the Russians to rise against "the Red czar" and kill him.

Outside of Russia and Italy the anti-Fascists said a "secret radio station" was broadcasting Communist propaganda from Milan, the anti-Communists said a secret station was broadcasting anti-Soviet propaganda from somewhere within the Russian frontier.

The truth was that the Italian broadcasts emanated from one of Moscow's several powerful stations, the speaker a Communist refugee from Italy with a Florentine accent. The Russian broadcasts came from one of the powerful Rome stations, where Mussolini's propaganda ministry hired a refugee from the Bolshevik regime. The broadcasts were a waste of time and electric energy. The ordinary Soviet citizen did

not possess a short-wave radio receiver, but only a low-power set for local broadcasts, which was likewise the case, I later found, among the mass of Italian workers.

Communist propaganda in Italy was not broadcast by radio, but circulated in leaflets and by word of mouth through the underground. There was no doubt that it was intensified in the autumn of 1937, probably the result of Fascism's new alliance with Hitlerism. Within a few weeks the Italian press announced the conviction of 109 anti-Fascists, some identified as "Communist plotters," and the OVRA was given millions of lire to press its espionage among the suspected enemies of the state.

In the diplomatic war the Soviet Foreign Office fired one protest that went off half-cocked. It knew better. So many Soviet diplomats had been recalled to Moscow and liquidated that any who received a summons must have trembled in his shoes. Several refused to come home, usually by just disappearing. One who disappeared before he was called home was Feodor Butenko, the Soviet chargé d'affaires at Bucharest.

From a Soviet source I have the story that Litvinoff tried to convince Stalin that Butenko had deserted the Bolshevik camp. Stalin said it could not be true, because Butenko was a new man, freshly educated for diplomacy in a school the Kremlin had set up to train the men with which it replaced those who were purged.

Butenko had been in Bucharest only three months. He had taken the place of Ostrovky, the former minister, who was recalled and purged. Butenko could have been a minister soon, had he not been frightened.

The night of February 9, 1938, the Soviet Foreign Office announced a protest to the Rumanian government. Butenko undoubtedly was kidnaped or killed, the victim of a "Fascist political crime," the statement said. There was considerable embarrassment around the press office when we brought tele-

grams from our home offices a week later, notifying us that Butenko had turned up in Rome. He explained to Fascist officials and newspapers that he understood an OGPU plot was afoot to kill or kidnap him, so he had run away from Bucharest.

None of that, of course, appeared in the controlled press of Moscow. So far as the Soviet citizen ever knew, Butenko remained "a victim of a Fascist crime."

Rome made a propaganda holiday of the Butenko case. The Fascist papers splurged the runaway diplomat's story of the Stalinist purge on their front pages. When the Italians had wrung the story dry they tossed Butenko into oblivion. It is even said that they interned him, more or less, on one of the Italian islands.

Hitler took the front pages again. His new army invaded Austria in March. Five truck loads of German infantry, under a lieutenant-colonel, occupied the Brenner Pass, where Mussolini rushed forty thousand troops four years before.

For the first time Germany was Italy's next door neighbor.

Correspondents in Rome at the time said the Italians felt they had been betrayed and tricked. The distrust of the Germans which they had always felt had been lulled by the Rome-Berlin Axis, so long as it kept the poles of the axis apart. This distrust was revived to the full when the Italians awoke one morning to find that the anschluss they had striven for years to prevent was an accomplished fact.

To foreigners, some Italians confided their misgivings at the prospect of eighty million Germans pressing on the frontiers over which throughout the centuries most invaders have poured into Italy.

Mussolini was cognizant of the Italian reaction when he said in a later speech, "Frontiers must be defended, not discussed." Hitler was aware of it, as proved by the haste with which he assured Mussolini that the German expansion would stop at the Brenner.

Mussolini in March, 1934, had told an assembly of the Fascist party:

"Since the war we have followed a friendly policy toward Austria and we have defended its integrity and independence . . . Austria knows that she can count on us to defend her independence and sovereignty."

That was the year when the Duce sent his troops to the Brenner. Why did he abandon Austria? Why did Ciano tell Jules Blondel, the French chargé d'affaires in Rome, two days before the anschluss that it was impossible for Italy to join France and Great Britain "in any action whatever" to defend Austrian independence?

It was not because the blue eyes of the Germans had any sentimental attraction for the Duce. It was not because he agreed with Hitler that Europe should be ruled by a Nordic herrenvolk of pure Aryan strain. Mussolini knew there was little to expect from the Teutons as a northern neighbor. He knew well the history of the German occupations of Milan, Venice, and Trieste through the centuries.

As *quid pro quo* in the first operation of the Axis, from which Germany gained and Italy might some day lose, Mussolini asked and obtained:

1. Hitler's promise that German expansion to the south would stop at the Italian frontier.

2. Hitler's recognition of Italy's "vital interests" in French-controlled Tunisia, Greece, and Yugoslavia.

That, I am told, is recorded in a little black book which Count Ciano keeps in a safe in his office against the day when he may become the historian of Fascist Italy's diplomacy.

Mussolini, in his headlong drive for a new Italian national and imperial renaissance, was also forced to accept his partnership with Hitler and all its consequences to avoid the political isolation into which he had jockeyed Italy. He had a haunting fear of isolation, a craving to be great.

By his defiance of Britain and France in the Ethiopian war,

by his joining with Hitler in sending aid to Franco in Spain, he had burned his boats, as the Italians say. With his record before them true democrats could never trust Mussolini.

Hitler, therefore, was Italy's only friend. He had let Italy have supplies in the Ethiopian war. Ciano told a diplomatic friend that Germany drove a hard bargain, refused Italy credits, and collected in cash at a profit for everything it sent. Still, Hitler had helped. In October, 1936, moreover, Germany formally recognized the conquest of Ethiopia.

Mussolini also resented the fact that he had won no gratitude for the gesture in Austria's behalf four years earlier. When he sent troops to the Brenner, he told his Chamber of Deputies later, "No Austrian ever thanked me for that."

He knew that Italy, alone, was too weak to oppose Hitler's quickly rearmed Germany any longer. He knew, too, that his Fascism was responsible for Hitler's. Even if he had been strong enough to oppose Hitler it would never do to let the world see dog eat dog. Mussolini knew that the destinies of Fascist states lie together. It was too late to desert a fellow Fascist for the democracies, whose form of government he despised anyway.

The highroad of international Fascism might lead to another European war. He would try to avoid that. But if his ally led him up the road that far, there is no doubt he believed that together they could wage a successful war.

Mussolini knew all that, but strangely there were statesmen in London and Paris who could not see it.

The Soviet policy toward the "Fascist aggressors," as the Red press invariably called Italy and Germany, was exactly the contrary of the British.

Moscow wanted the democracies, especially Britain and France, to gang up on the bullies of Rome and Berlin. Litvinoff was for collective security, but he wanted it collective, with the nations of Europe really ready to pool their

strength and fight whatever country struck one of them. The tendency was too much toward wheedling worthless promises of good behavior out of Italy and Germany.

This tendency was exemplified when, a fortnight before Hitler triumphantly rode into Vienna, Chamberlain announced his policy of appeasing the dictators. Perhaps because all roads lead to Rome, it was to begin there. Winston Churchill declared in the House of Commons that it was "an unpromising experiment" and Anthony Eden resigned from the cabinet.

Even after the coup in Austria, Chamberlain continued the negotiations and Mussolini was glad to make a deal with Britain. Did it not show his people that he could play power politics to their advantage?

The Anglo-Italian accord came quickly. The British ambassador, the Earl of Perth, who was formerly Sir Eric Drummond, and Count Ciano exchanged letters April 16, 1938, under the terms of which:

1. Italy would withdraw its troops from Spain at the end of the civil war there.

2. Great Britain would work through the League of Nations for the recognition of Italian conquest of Ethiopia.

3. Italy gave assurance that it had no territorial or political aims in Spain and sought "no privileged economic position" there.

4. Italy adhered to the 1936 London naval treaty signed by Great Britain, the United States, and France.

5. Italy agreed to withdraw its troops from Libya until a peacetime strength of thirty thousand men was reached.

6. Both powers reaffirmed the convention that guaranteed the free use of the Suez Canal at all times by all powers.

7. Italy reaffirmed its guarantee not to obstruct Lake Tana, Ethiopian source of the Blue Nile.

8. Both powers agreed to halt their radio propaganda against each other in the Near East.

9. They reaffirmed the gentlemen's agreement of January, 1937, to respect the status quo in the Mediterranean.

10. Italy abandoned all claims to Arabian territory bordering on the Red Sea.

11. They agreed to exchange information on major military movements in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and other regions.

12. They agreed to negotiate their boundary issues in East Africa.

13. Great Britain granted certain rights in the Aden protectorate.

14. Italy agreed not to raise a native army in Ethiopia.

15. Italy agreed to let British missionaries continue to work in Ethiopia.

16. Italy extended trading facilities to the British in Ethiopia on a British promise to prevent raids in Ethiopia from Kenya and the Sudan.

One can easily see that neither side gained much, but the advantage, if any, was Italy's.

In Paris the government of Edouard Daladier, who had replaced Léon Blum, decided it would try to negotiate a similar accord. France was in a more delicate position than Britain because the government had recalled its ambassador, Charles de Chambrun, and could not send another to Rome without accrediting him to the king as also Emperor of Ethiopia.

The Franco-Italian talks followed the general lines of the British negotiations. Paris wanted an exchange of letters on Spain and Africa, pledges to maintain the status quo, a good-neighbor agreement regarding Syria. The Italians wanted concessions that would give them free passage through the Red Sea port of Djibouti in French Somaliland, and the railroad that linked it with Addis Ababa, as well as better treatment for the Italians in French-occupied Tunisia. But Mussolini was not yet ready to conclude a deal.

Ciano, under the Duce's orders, was slow to respond to the French overtures. The negotiations were interrupted twice; once when Ciano went to Tirana for the marriage of King Zog of Albania, and again when Hitler visited Mussolini in May.

Mussolini gave the Fuehrer an even gaudier show than the one staged for the Duce's delight in Germany six months earlier. Rome was decorated with pylons, arches, and banners. Special highways, railroad tracks, and a new station were built for the occasion. Where Mussolini had seen the fasces in Munich and Berlin, Hitler found the swastika in Rome, Naples, and Florence. The visitor saw spectacles of youth, spectacles of art, and spectacles of opera. He was the guest of the king at a state dinner. So that he would know he had a fighting ally he was shown a mock naval battle in the Bay of Naples, where four hundred planes sank two merchantmen, and a sham battle in a valley that was shot to bits by artillery fire.

It cost the Italians thirty million lire. They cheered Mussolini louder than they did Hitler. Already bewildered by the German march to the "passo del Brennero," as they called the Brenner Pass, they saw the Blackshirt troops stiffly parade in goosestep, which Mussolini had introduced in February as the "passo Romano."

"As a result of the Rome-Berlin Axis," the Italians said, "Italy has acquired the passo Romano and lost the passo del Brennero."

A colleague, Melvin K. Whiteleather, who was there at the time, said their hearts were not in their cheers. Even some Fascist officials resented the situation. They preferred the French to the Germans, much as they resented the French condescension. They respected the British Empire, much as they thought the British hypocrites. Italy's dynamic foreign policy gratified their national pride, but Italians were skeptical of the advantages to be derived from the wars in Ethiopia and

Spain. They did not like war. They had no illusions about the inexhaustibility of Italy's resources in a further war.

No disturbance marked the festivities, however. Mussolini's police, with the aid of Gestapo agents, had seen to that by arresting or deporting out of Rome, Naples, and Florence more than six thousand persons of doubtful reactions to the dictators.

Of all the Italians, only Pope Pius XI was outspoken. From Castel Gandolfo, where he retired three days earlier to snub the persecutor of his Church, he said it was "a sad thing" that it "is not considered exceedingly out of place and untimely to hoist in Rome . . . the insignia of another cross that is not the cross of Christ." The Vatican Museum was closed to Hitler.

When they had time for a talk Mussolini gave Hitler a free hand in Czechoslovakia and promised to use diplomacy on the Czech government to obtain its acceptance of the German demands for the Sudetenland. He insisted, however, that Hitler do nothing to provoke a European war.

Hitler could take what he wanted in Europe, piece by piece, and Mussolini could do nothing about it. But it is certain, in the light of developments, that the Duce cautioned the Fuehrer against hasty action. Italy was not capable of fighting another war, with that in Spain still draining its meager resources. A European war could be catastrophic for Fascism.

Hitler's reply has never been disclosed. But in toasting the Fuehrer at the final dinner in Rome, Mussolini said, "Your visit in Rome completes and seals the understanding between our two countries . . . Fascist Italy knows only one ethical law of friendship . . . This law, collaboration between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, Italy has obeyed, is obeying, and will obey."

Yet Blondel told Ciano ten days later of French "surprise" at Mussolini's saying in a speech at Genoa that he did not

know whether the Franco-Italian talks would be concluded because in Spain "we are on opposite sides of the barricades; they desire a victory for Barcelona and we for General Franco."

VIII

The Peacemaker

The hot humidity of a sirocco, the south wind that picks up heat from the Libyan desert and moisture from the Mediterranean with which to oppress Italy, weighed heavily on Rome in August, 1938. So, to, did the foreign policy of the Duce and the invisible hand of Hitler.

The cost of living had risen after the Ethiopian war and unemployment was again acute. Shopkeepers said business was bad and the manufacturers needed raw materials.

General Attilio Teruzzi, undersecretary of state for Italian Africa, had inspected Ethiopia and brought a first-hand report to Mussolini that it would take years to pacify the new colony before it could be opened to settlers. It was not yet self-supporting in food. Nothing more was heard of the unlimited jobs in the Empire, where the only work was that of a few hundred colonists and seventy-five thousand men completing a network of roads.

I noticed that the Fascists rarely exchanged the Roman salute when they greeted one another. A hotel porter nearly fell backward in surprise when a German arrival saluted him and automatically said "Heil Hitler!"

Italy had spent billions of lire on the Spanish war, which showed no signs of ending. Taxes were high. The army and the upper middle class were for Franco, but the Spanish war, all war, was unpopular with the rank and file, who were weary of conflict and sacrifice. Now Europe was threatened with a new and bigger war over Hitler's demands on Czechoslovakia for the Sudetenland, with its 3,500,000 Germans.

Into Italy, Hitler had introduced anti-Semitism. Mussolini

denied that it came from Germany, but the Italians knew better.

Emil Ludwig had reported in 1932 that Mussolini told him, "Anti-Semitism does not exist in Italy. The Italian Jews have always behaved well as citizens and fought bravely as soldiers. They occupy eminent positions in the universities, army, banks."

I arrived to find the anti-Semitic campaign gathering speed rapidly. The doctrine was added suddenly to the Fascist program in the spring after a committee of Italian and German jurists met in Rome to study the legislation of the two countries and suggest a parallel development.

Soon the newspapers were publishing handouts from the Ministry of Popular Culture on the need for a racial policy. The government curtailed the sale of books by Jewish authors. It asked the Rome correspondent of the Jewish Telegraph Agency to leave and also expelled Paul Cremona, the correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor.*

It is inevitable in hastily applied persecution that the persecutors make mistakes. Cremona, a British subject born in Malta, was not a Jew, but because his family name is that of an Italian city and many Italian Jews are named for cities, he was assumed to be one. Cremona went to London, where, incidentally, he afterwards prepared Italian-language broadcasts for the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Within a few weeks Jews had been excluded from the schools and told they must set up their own educational institutions. They were expelled from the faculties, from the Royal Academy of Italy and other learned societies, from the army and the navy.

Since the Italian Jews were believed to number about forty-four thousand, or about one in every thousand of the Italian population, that ratio was adopted to determine the number of Jews who could "participate in the full life of the state," in other words, who would be unmolested.

Jews of foreign nationality and those who had come to Italy after the First World War, numbering about twenty thousand, were ordered to leave Italy within six months.

Mussolini was soon embarrassed by the unfavorable reaction, not only abroad, but in Italy, where the people had never thought much about Jews, since there were so few in the country and Italians were not race conscious. Lacking a valid reason for the new policy he invented one. He had his propaganda ministry explain that the racial program was intended to prevent the creation of a hybrid race in Italy. Now that Italy was going to colonize Ethiopia, there might be a "catastrophic plague of mongrelism" unless the whites were prevented from interbreeding with the blacks. Jews were forbidden to marry so-called Aryan Italians, but there would be no persecution of the Jews.

The real reason was that Hitler had already begun to dictate Italian domestic as well as foreign policy, by "suggestion." Some observers thought the racial campaign offered the government a welcome means to distract the people from the failure of Ethiopia to provide handsome dividends, from the many Italian casualties in Spain, and from the billions squandered there.

At any rate, the Jews were concerned about the uncertainty of their position and many tried to get to France or the United States.

The Duce was more heavily involved in Hitler's foreign policy than he was at home. Count Ciano confirmed to Sir Noel Charles, the British chargé d'affaires, that Italy would remain "absolutely outside" the German quarrel with Czechoslovakia, as Mussolini had told Hitler in Rome in May. But if war spread in Europe, Italy was not sure to be spared. Mussolini, therefore, had to do his utmost to get the Czechoslovak government to bow to Hitler.

While his foreign minister in Rome and his minister at Prague worked behind the scenes, Mussolini launched a propaganda campaign through a device borrowed from Berlin. It consisted of a statement called *Informazione Diplomatica,* distributed by the Ministry of Popular Culture. The statements were usually written in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but during the Czechoslovakian crisis Mussolini himself wrote two of them.

He first advised the Prague government to grant the autonomy demand of the German minority in the Sudetenland. He said that aid from France and Soviet Russia, which had mutual assistance pacts with Czechoslovakia, was "hypothetical."

A week later the second statement again advised the Czechoslovak government to give to the Sudeten Germans the possibility of seceding. The only other solution, it said, was "disorder and war."

Two days later, when the Prague government had disregarded his exhortations, Mussolini wrote an open letter to Viscount Runciman, the British mediator at Prague. It was published in *Il Popolo d'Italia* and while it did not bear the Duce's name there was no mistaking its style. An editor of the newspaper confirmed to me that Mussolini wrote it.

"You should simply propose to Beneš a plebiscite not only for the Sudetens, but for all nationalities who ask for it," Mussolini wrote. He had in mind particularly the Hungarians, over whom the Duce always endeavored to exercise a tutelage.

"If Hitler wanted to annex 3,500,000 Czechs, Europe would be right in being moved and moving," Mussolini added. "But Hitler is not thinking of that."

In view of Hitler's eventual annexation of the Czechs, the question arises as to whether Mussolini was insincere when he wrote those words or if he really believed Hitler wanted only the Sudetenland. I suspect insincerity. Mussolini was too astute in world politics to be fooled by Hitler's statements or

promises, even though he accepted them publicly at their face value. The Duce's next act bears that out. He went to Trieste.

Trieste, like Czechoslovakia, was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire before the First World War. Hitler had said in Rome in May, "It is my unshakable will and also my political testament to the German people to consider inviolable for all times the frontiers of the Alps erected between us by nature." Mussolini, nevertheless, went to Trieste to tell the people there that, whatever came, he counted on their loyalty.

Of the correspondents in Rome, Frank Gervasi, Frank Smothers, David Woodward, and I flew to Trieste to hear the speech.

Men and women in the black uniforms of Fascism started gathering early the next morning, Sunday, in the great square at Trieste that faces the water front. It was the first time I had ever seen so many Fascists in one mass. The men looked military enough, although many conspicuous paunches indicated the jobholders among them were getting fat on the party. The women looked pretty awful, I thought. Their black skirts and military jackets were poorly made of cheap serge, the wearers had an uncomfortable appearance in mannish, stiff, white collars with black ties, and their black trench-style caps were not as becoming as you might think.

There must have been one hundred thousand persons packed in the square in solid ranks by midafternoon. At the opposite end from the water front was a huge black podium, the height of a three-story house, marked with an enormous M in imperial purple.

Mussolini's entry would have made an actor weep with envy. When the last block of Blackshirts had wedged itself into the audience, a destroyer appeared in the harbor, racing full speed ahead at forced draft with smoke streaming from her funnels. She was the *Camicia Nera* (Black Shirt), bringing the Duce from Venice. She steamed right up to the dock, came to a stop alongside, and Mussolini, in the gray-green

uniform of first marshal of the Empire, jumped ashore. He strode at a pace that was almost a run through a long passage that had been left clear for him, mounted to the podium two steps at a time, and raised his arm in the Fascist salute. The crowd roared, "Duce, Duce, Duce!"

Mussolini once explained the frequent public spectacles in Fascist Italy by saying, "People must have excitement." He gave the people of Trieste a spectacle that day.

He hoped for peace, he said, but if the Czech crisis meant war, "Italy's place is already chosen." He reaffirmed Italy's adherence to the Rome-Berlin Axis and repeated his suggestion of a plebiscite.

The crowd cheered constantly, except when he mentioned Czechoslovakia. Then it booed and that was the clue to the cheers. For the Italian people had no animosity toward Czechoslovakia. They knew too little about the country and its people. Their booing was started by a clacque. If that was true the spontaneity of their cheers at the right places also was open to doubt.

As for Trieste's loyalty:

"Trieste knows geography is not an opinion and will work itself out in the long run, regardless of those who think otherwise. Trieste cannot and does not turn back on anyone."

Since Trieste was Italy's most Jewish city, with five thousand Jews among its 250,000 inhabitants, Mussolini said:

"Jews of Italian citizenship who have unquestioned military or civil merit in the eyes of Italy and the regime will find justice and comprehension. As to the others, a policy of separation will be found. . . .

"Those who try to make it believed we have obeyed or imitated—or worse, been influenced—are poor half-wits to whom we accord our contempt and our pity."

The mass of Italians who never see the Vatican newspaper, *Osservatore Romano*, did not know to whom Mussolini referred. But many readers of the paper were sorely offended,

for they had read in it that Pius XI asked at a public audience in July "why in the world did Italy unfortunately feel the need to imitate Germany." The epithet of "poor halfwit" applied to the pope was indicative of Mussolini's disregard for the dignity of any person who dared to criticize his acts.

From Trieste the Duce toured the border regions and the battlefields where he fought as a corporal in the First World War.

There is no doubt that Mussolini was frightened at the growing prospect of war, although he never let it show in the slightest word or gesture. It was evident only in the speeches he made every day for a week. He knew Italy was unprepared for a fresh war, after the losses of arms in the Ethiopian and Spanish wars. In August he had conferred with the general staffs of the army and air force to consider means of increasing both the quantity and quality of their equipment. Italy was in serious need of planes. He knew Italians did not want to fight another war. He could not open his mouth and cough up guns and tanks and planes, but he could shout propaganda.

He tried, therefore, to kindle the old fire of resentment with references to sanctions, "the economic siege of fifty-two nations." He did what every dictator does in a tight spot. He tried to lay the guilt for whatever came on the other fellow, by declaring the totalitarian powers were bent only on peace, but the democratic countries were bent on fighting the Fascist nations. It was not until September 27, four days before the deadline of Hitler's demands on Czechoslovakia, that Mussolini fearfuly began mobilizing ten reserve units.

Chamberlain rescued Mussolini from his fears. He asked the Duce to bring Hitler into a conference with Daladier, Chamberlain, and Mussolini. Lord Perth called on Ciano at ten-thirty in the morning with Chamberlain's telegram. Immediately Mussolini got through on the telephone to Hitler. He told Hitler that if he postponed German mobilization for twenty-four hours he probably could get the Sudetenland

without fighting for it. Hitler, who preferred to win his battles by diplomatic blackmail, agreed to the postponement.

That day the faces in the streets of Rome had grown gloomier and gloomier. At four-thirty in the afternoon reports spread like wildfire, nobody knew from what source, that the Duce would mediate. Italians shouted with joy and ran to telephones to tell their friends. The Associated Press office then was on the mezzanine floor of the Stefani building and we could hear the jubilation in the narrow Via della Vite under the open windows.

The American embassy staff, meanwhile, was in a dither. A cablegram had arrived in the night with a personal appeal by President Roosevelt to the Duce to use his influence for peace. As soon as it was decoded a secretary telephoned to Florence, where Ambassador William Phillips was staying. The ambassador took the first train, was met at the station by members of his staff with the message, and went directly to deliver it to Mussolini at the Palazzo Venezia.

That evening Mussolini and Ciano set out by train for Munich. The next day, January 28, the news of the agreement by which Chamberlain and Daladier abandoned the Sudetenland to Germany confirmed the high hopes of the Italians.

The Italians were especially pleased because they thought Mussolini was chiefly responsible for the accord. He had not failed them, his newspapers were quick to point out, as they reported "Mussolini's immense prestige throughout the world" and the cheers in the House of Commons when Chamberlain announced that the Duce had agreed to act as mediator.

Mussolini had become the peacemaker, "the arbiter of peace," his own *Popolo d'Italia* called him. His principle that the four big powers of western Europe could settle the problems of the continent, which he had embodied in his four-power pact in 1933, had succeeded.

Again Mussolini had escaped a crisis and saved the prestige at home, so essential for the endurance of his regime.

The Italians had absolute confidence in Mussolini. With them the Dictator's prestige was at its height. The Italians were unwilling to fight on the side of Germany for Czechoslovakia. They would have fought, because two decades of Fascism made them respond whenever Mussolini cracked the whip.

But when the Duce set out for the Munich conference the average Italian, who had made little effort to hide his feelings about the Germans from the secret police, said, "Mussolini knows what is in my heart. There will be no war."

IX

"Tunisia, Corsica, Djibouti!"

Mussolini came home from Munich with high hopes for his own game to get something out of the Rome-Berlin Axis. The vast expansion of German influence and the enormous increase in German strength that it portended made him feel it would be too risky to drop the tie-up with Hitler.

It was essential, however, that in the eyes of the Italian people Italy should not appear too much to have the short end of the Axis. A good turn was due Italy.

Hitler had promised Mussolini that Italy should have a share in the political influence and commerce to be applied to and developed with the Danubian and Balkan countries, Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece. Rome was to have an eager voice in fixing the New Order in Europe. As a token of this Ciano was allowed to help Ribbentrop allot part of Czechoslovakia to Hungary in what was solemnly called Axis arbitration.

That gratified the Italian craving for the role of a star in European diplomacy, but it lacked any tangible returns. It was not enough for Italy to tell others how much they might have. She must have something herself.

France appeared to be disorganized by domestic troubles. Daladier had agreed to the Munich deal. His government had decided to recognize the conquest of Ethiopia and appointed an ambassador to Rome who would be accredited to the king as Emperor of Ethiopia. André Francois-Poncet, exquisite example of Gallic elegance from his sharp-toed shoes to his waxed mustache and monocle, was transferred from Berlin to Rome.

In this, as in the Munich deal, Daladier had followed the lead of Chamberlain. The House of Commons had authorized the prime minister to make the Easter agreement effective, the Earl of Perth and Count Ciano signed a declaration to this effect on November 11, and the British ambassador presented new credentials in which Vittorio Emanuele III was recognized as king-emperor.

With appeasement in the air Mussolini might hope France would yield something concrete to Italy. The Italians must proceed cautiously, however. They must avoid an act that would lead to war, while appearing to be ready for a battle. The campaign, therefore, must start with a popular demand for what the Duce wanted. At Munich, Mussolini had cannily invited Chamberlain to visit Rome. There would be time enough for strong talk.

The day before Ciano and Perth signed the declaration on the Anglo-Italian accord, a group of war veterans concluded their congress in Rome with a march to the Piazza Venezia. There Mussolini made the customary appearance on his balcony to receive their acclaim. He was greeted by the strange cry of "Savoy, Nice, Tunisia!"

One could understand the shout of "Savoia." That was the name of Italy's ruling house, which was cradled in Savoy, and it had been the Italian soldier's battle cry in World War I. But coupled with the names of two other French-held regions, Nice in the Alpes-Maritimes and Tunisia in North Africa, the shout obviously had deeper significance.

Nice and Savoy had once been Italian, so the Fascists might find some ground for an Irredentist movement there, although both regions were French in language and customs.

The Dukes of Savoy, in the days of petty lords, acquired the principality of Piedmont on the Italian side of the Alps, and in 1718, Vittorio Amadeo II of Savoy and Piedmont became the King of Sardinia. A successor, Vittorio Amadeo III of Sardinia, fought against the French revolutionaries in

support of the Bourbon monarchy. His army was defeated and Savoy and Nice were absorbed into France for some twenty years, until Napoleon's downfall in 1815. Then the Congress of Vienna returned the territories to Sardinia.

For some time they remained a pawn in the game of European politics. In the fight of Sardinia to unite Italy as a constitutional monarchy Count Cavour, the great Piedmontese statesman, sought the aid of Napoleon III, Emperor of France, against Austria, which held Lombardy and Venezia. Napoleon promised help in ridding Italy of the Austrians, but he asked for Savoy and Nice in return. An agreement was reached at the little watering place of Plombières, in the Vosges, in 1858.

The war against Austria ended in a compromise peace when Napoleon III tired of the campaign. Austria kept Venezia, but gave up Lombardy. The Italians were not entirely satisfied, but King Vittorio Emanuele II fulfilled his share of the bargain. A plebiscite in Savoy and Nice resulted in an almost unanimous vote for union with France and the cession was consummated in 1860.

On Tunisia, the Italians could lay no claims of prior possession since the days of the Roman Empire. The French had beat them to that section of the North African coast.

Both Italy and France coveted Tunisia in 1881, when it was ruled by a bey who was virtually independent, although theoretically under the sovereignty of Turkey. It lay invitingly close to the toe of the Italian boot. But it bordered on Algeria, which France had conquered thirty years earlier.

Bismarck, Germany's astute Iron Chancellor, was anxious for France to turn its attention away from Alsace and Lorraine. He therefore encouraged France's colonial aspirations. "The Tunisian pear is ripe and it is time for you to pluck it," he told the French ambassador.

France plucked Tunisia and Italy protested strongly. In 1896, however, the Italians signed a convention with the French which recognized a French protectorate over Tunisia.

In 1904, France gave Italy a free hand in Tripoli and seven years later the Italians took over the colony which became Libya.

The Germans had given the Italians no aid or encouragement against the French in Tunisia. It was even said that Bismarck hoped to alienate Italy from France and drive her into an alliance with Germany. In 1882, Italy joined Germany and Austria in the famous Triple Alliance, although Bismarck distrusted Italy as an ally and spoke of the "fickle character" and "childish egoism" of the Italian people.

The British and the French lured Italy from the Triple Alliance in 1915 with the promises of territory which were never entirely fulfilled after World War I. In 1938, Italy again was allied with Germany. But this time, the diplomats heard, the chancellor, Hitler, had agreed to support Italy's aspirations in Tunisia. After the Duce's acquiescence in the annexation of Austria, Hitler had telegraphed to Mussolini, "I will never forget this."

How far Mussolini's Tunisian aspirations went has never been defined. Many Italians had already found homes in Tunisia, so near to Southern Italy that it was a convenient boat ride away for emigrants. The census of 1936 showed 106,568 French inhabitants and 94,389 Italians, or more Italians than all the Europeans in Libya in the same year.

Mussolini at least wanted to make certain that children of the Italian settlers would retain their Italian nationality. Laval, in the 1935 agreement, had agreed to this for the thirty years until 1965, although the children born after 1945 were to have the option of choosing French nationality when they reached their majority.

It was apparent that Mussolini still regarded Tunisia as an outlet for Italy's overabundant population. Unpacified Ethiopia, like the arid wildernesses of Eritrea, Somaliland, and Jubaland, had proved relatively worthless as living room for surplus Italians or as markets for Italian goods. This was

demonstrated when eighteen thousand colonists in fifteen shiploads were sent to Libya, rather than to Ethiopia, in 1938.

The afternoon of November 30, 1938, the Italian Chamber of Deputies met for its last full-dress session. It had long been a hand-picked organization of Fascist yes men and its only duty that day was to cheer Count Ciano when he delivered a speech on Italian foreign policy.

While Mussolini sat in front of the assembly on the floor of the Chamber, Ciano delivered his address. He reviewed the situation leading up to the Munich conference that dismembered Czechoslovakia. He paid tribute to the Anglo-Italian pact as a factor for consolidating peace and then said:

"This consolidation is the objective of our policy and we will follow it with tenacity and realism, combined with that circumspection which is indispensable if we intend to guard with inflexible firmness the interests and national aspirations of the Italian people."

At the words "national aspirations" the lean and wiry secretary general of the Fascist party, Lieutenant General Achille Starace, jumped to his feet and led the Blackshirt deputies in shouts of "Tunisia! Tunisia!" In the galleries, the Blackshirt spectators added, "Djibouti! Corsica!"

That was Mussolini's way of telling the world that Italy's aim in the Axis was further territorial and colonial revision, this time at the expense of France and for the benefit of Italy.

Not only were Nice, Savoy, and Tunisia involved, but also Corsica, the birthplace of Napoleon, which the French had held since the island's surrender by the Genoese Republic in 1881, and Djibouti, French Somaliland gateway to Ethiopia by reason of the railroad which connects that port with Addis Ababa.

François-Poncet, who had come to Rome to improve Franco-Italian relations, peered through his monocle at the cheering deputies from his seat in the diplomatic gallery. The

urbane expression of his poker face did not change by a flicker. The French ambassador was probably aware, as were those in the press gallery, that the demonstration was carefully staged.

That morning we had heard the deputies had been instructed to shout the Italian demands at a signal from Starace. A British correspondent, Captain Jerry Strina, had telephoned the rumor to London hours before the Chamber met.

Two days later the French ambassador called on Count Ciano and expressed his government's surprise at the demands for territory belonging to France. Ciano told him that the demonstration was a spontaneous one.

Shortly before François-Poncet went to see Ciano, the *Giornale d'Italia* appeared on the streets with a bellicose blast by its editor, Virginio Gayda, who almost invariably wrote the thoughts of the Duce.

"The Italian nation, solidly behind its government, is ready for anything," Gayda wrote. "It is ready to march, if necessary, even against France."

Gayda was by no means an independent journalist, expressing public opinion. He was a tool of the Fascist government, engaged in molding public opinion for it. He had traveled in Russia and was married to a Polish Jewess, who died shortly after it became necessary for her husband to write anti-Jewish editorials in Italy's new Nazi-inspired racial campaign. Her death grieved him deeply, to appearances, but it probably saved him considerable embarrassment.

It was not true, as some have written, that Gayda saw Mussolini every day. He rarely saw the Duce. An equally authoritative editorial exponent of Italian foreign policy was Giovanni Ansaldo, a better and, some said, a more intelligent writer.

Ansaldo was editor of Count Ciano's newspaper, *Il Telegrafo* of Leghorn. A Socialist journalist before the March on Rome, he was arrested when the Fascists came to power. The

Cianos, father and son, recognized him as a clever man, however, and obtained his release. They not only put him in charge of their newspaper, but consulted him on business matters. Ansaldo accepted the situation and embraced Fascism with the ardor which Italians describe as "more Catholic than the pope." Ciano once told a diplomat, "If you want to know what I think, read Ansaldo."

But if Ansaldo spoke for Ciano, Gayda spoke for Mussolini in the sense that his editorials were suggested by the Duce. Every morning the propaganda minister went to Mussolini and asked him for the day's instructions for the press. After outlining what he expected to read in the next editions, the Duce would supply an additional idea for Gayda. This would be communicated to the editor, who then would go to the Foreign Office, where a certain official would supply whatever documentary material was required to round out the article. This I know from a young official who had the assignment for a time.

Yet, when both François-Poncet and Lord Perth complained to Ciano about the press campaign set loose by Gayda, the foreign minister told them the government was not responsible for demonstrations in parliament, in the streets, or in the press.

The British government was concerned because the Italian claims on France made nonsense of the Italian-British accord. This declaration reaffirmed a previous one of January 2, 1937, in which the British and Italian governments disclaimed "any desire to modify or, so far as they are concerned, to see modified the status quo as regards national sovereignty over territories in the Mediterranean area."

Ciano's disavowal of government responsibility in the demonstrations was published abroad, but not in Italy. The public, therefore, assumed the government was behind them, since it well knew that everything was ordered in the papers it read.

Consequently, a flurry of street demonstrations accompa-

nied the editorial outbursts against France. There were anti-French demonstrations in front of the Palazzo Venezia and the French embassy, where strong cordons of police stood guard. Most of the manifestants were school children and university students, who did a certain amount of shouting, but never tried to force the barriers and seemed, on the whole, to be more gleeful at the chance to miss classes than they were angry at France.

The German ambassador, Hans Georg von Mackensen, saw Ciano December 5 and the agitation subsided as suddenly as it had sprung up. It may be that he conveyed a suggestion of Hitler that it was no time to press the colonial claims against France, since the Germans were about to sign a good-neighbor agreement in Paris.

The response from France was immediate and firm. French determination to resist the Italian claims was expressed in one word, "Jamais." Never, the French said, would they surrender one inch of their territory. There were anti-Italian demonstrations in Corsica and Tunisia.

Within a week the Italians resumed their demonstrations. The press roared at the French "provocations." The newspapers increased the demands, calling for a share in the control of the Suez Canal. The tolls which all shipping paid for transit had cost Italy 175,000,000 lire, or about $9,210,000, in 1937.

Chamberlain told the House of Commons the British government would view "with grave concern" an Italian attack on Tunisia. France's foreign minister, Georges Bonnet, said Italy's ambitions could be realized only at the cost of war. The Italian government informed France that the Laval-Mussolini pact was no longer valid, that everything was back to where it was before the 1935 accord. The French told Chamberlain not to try to mediate the Tunisia dispute when he went to Rome. "Leave it to us," they said. Daladier visited Corsica and Tunisia, where crowds welcomed him with shouts

of "Mussolini to the gallows." The French reinforced their troops at Djibouti.

Mussolini had stirred up Europe's second crisis in three short months. France had begun to reap the whirlwind from the seeds of Munich. Mussolini was fighting a Hitleresque war of nerves, but Italy was far from ready for a shooting war. The Duce was waiting for Chamberlain to come and appease him at the expense of France.

The Duce was furious when he heard that the "spontaneous" demonstration of November 30 had missed fire because it was known what the deputies were to shout. He suspected a leak among his own newsmen. By his personal order it was forbidden to Italian journalists thereafter to work for foreign newspapers or press associations.

The propaganda ministry notified two hundred Italian newspapermen that they must cease serving foreign employers by January 1. Hardest hit was Arnaldo Cortesi, an Italian citizen, who was the correspondent of the New York *Times*. It is to the credit of his employer that he was transferred, first to Mexico City, later to Buenos Aires.

This reprisal for the leakage of the news of the demonstration in the Chamber cut us off temporarily from the Italian correspondents in the provinces who ordinarily telephoned the news from their key cities, Milan, Naples, Genoa, Trieste, and many others. Eventually the ministry granted special permission to certain of the correspondents to serve us. But it was never the same. They were intimidated and we had to find out as best we could what was going on.

The Stefani agency, the official news distribution service of the Italian government, was the only Italian-recognized source of our news. It was completely in the hands of the Fascist government.

Perhaps I should explain here something of the Fascist censorship. It was not an outright censorship and therefore was

more annoying than the Soviet system, for example, under which one was required to submit his dispatches to an official who signed and rubber-stamped them before they could be transmitted. Under the Soviet system, at least, one could argue with the censor.

In Italy, as in Germany, that form of "preventive censorship" was considered too democratic. The Italians preferred that the correspondent write as he please and take the consequences. If he offended the regime he was expelled from the country.

Ten correspondents were expelled during my first year in Rome. A typical example was Frank (Zeke) Smothers of the Chicago *Daily News*. Zeke was notified November 22, 1938, that he was no longer persona grata and must leave by the end of that month. He was guilty of having written, about the Anglo-Italian pact, that "Mussolini had shown the Italian people, countless of whom have long worried over his foreign adventures, that he had got away with it as far as England is concerned."

We American correspondents all went down to the station when Zeke, his wife and children, took the train for Paris.

The government stifled all news enterprise through its Ministry of Popular Culture.

Not all Americans perhaps realized that nothing could be published in Italy without the consent of the government, granted through the Ministry of Popular Culture. Every day the newspapers received instructions as to what they might and might not print. For instance, on August 31, 1938, they were told, in a mimeographed circular, they were not to mention the fact the departure of two Italian cruisers on a world tour had been canceled because of the European tension that preceded the Munich deal.

Most of the foreign correspondents, including the Americans, had their offices in the building of the Foreign Press Association, the Associazione della Stampa Estera. This build-

ing is a modernistic structure, combining offices and club rooms, on the Via della Mercede, across from the cable office. It was provided by the Fascist government, with telephones, writing rooms, a reading room, a ping-pong table, and a bar, all under the supervision of an Italian staff that was, in reality, a group of Fascist spies. The Associated Press offices were not in the building, but were three blocks away and independent of any Italian supervision.

The Ministry of Popular Culture, on the Via Vittorio Veneto, was the bane of the correspondent's life. One never obtained culture, and rarely information, there, but usually what the Italians call a head washing—when the correspondent overstepped the boundaries of Fascist propriety in news reporting.

The Ministry controlled everything that the public saw with its eyes, or heard with its ears. The newspapers, the radio, the newsreels, the books and magazines, the news photos, all were censored by the Ministry. Since the officials in charge, never newspapermen or radio experts or publishers, but minor career men of the diplomatic service, knew nothing of the requirements of those they attempted to serve, they were a hindrance more than a help to the foreign correspondent. The Fascist publicity service was primarily a suppression service.

After the sanctions of the Ethiopian war the Fascist economy's aim was autarchy, or self-sufficiency, and this was extended to so-called culture. It made no difference if American newspaper comics were the delight of Italian children. They must be eliminated. So it was that these cartoons were banished from the juvenile papers which had a circulation of 1,500,000 copies weekly. In their place were substituted strips glamorizing the heroism of Italian legionaries in the war in Spain. There was an immediate kickback from the youngsters of the nation, who knew what they wanted, regardless of politics. The favorites were the output of the Walt Disney studios. Almost every Italian boy and girl knew Mickey

Mouse, called Topolino in Italian. The smallest Italian automobile, a pint-sized car from the Fiat factory, was named for him. An exception, therefore, had to be made for Mickey Mouse, Pluto, Donald Duck, and one other favorite, Popeye the Sailor, who absorbed handfuls of spinach with an Italian accent.

Even our letters were censored in those prewar days, although Italian officials denied that they read our correspondence. Twice we had indisputable instances of it in our office. Once a business envelope arrived without any address whatever in its transparent "window." It bore only the return address of an insurance agency in Portland, Maine. Since a member of the AP staff, Charles H. Guptill, came from Portland, I asked him if he recognized the return address. He did and the envelope, on opening, yielded an insurance statement for him, returned upside down to the envelope when some snooper had resealed it. Another time a letter from the United States came for Ed Kennedy, who had gone to Budapest. I wrote a letter to Kennedy and enclosed the other one with mine. Two days later the correspondence was returned to the office. Somebody had resealed my letter and its envelope, addressed to Budapest, inside the envelope which had come from the United States for Kennedy and which bore the Rome address.

The Fascist journalists had their own rooms in the Piazza San Silvestro, half a block from the foreign press headquarters. Their quarters were more spacious—and they were more thoroughly under Fascist control. Every day the instructions to the Italian press were distributed among them. If the daily ukase told the Italians to "play down" a certain story, or to give it the greatest prominence, one knew the Fascist policy.

I soon learned that the foreign correspondent and his household were under a special surveillance, that of the secret police. This did not mean that we were always followed wherever we went. The watch over us was kept by the por-

tiere who, with his wife, keeps the door of the European apartment house.

We first lived in the Hotel Ambassador on the Via Veneto, then favored by Americans, largely because of its bar, which was a convenient meeting place, and because of the barman, Charlie, who had shaken cocktails at the Carlton in Paris when that establishment on the Champs Elysées was a rendezvous of the elite of both hemispheres.

The Ambassador was reputed to be staffed with nobody but police spies. But it offered hospitality to the correspondents and even provided them with a special telephone reserved for the press. We passed many pleasant cocktail hours there with Frank Gervasi, Stewart Brown, William Hillman, John T. Whitaker, and other correspondents, resident of or passing through Rome. The Ambassador had a subterranean night club, first called the Hollywood, where one could dance and during intermissions talk with the best of Roman society. It later was renamed the ABC, when the government forbade foreign names for Italian institutions.

The Via Veneto was the Fifth Avenue, the Rue de la Paix, and the Piccadilly of Rome. It was shady with trees in summer and its broad sidewalks contained beds of flowers that were cared for as only the Italian gardeners can do. There were the luxury shops and the cafés, especially Venchi's, where the gagas, the Italian equivalent of the drugstore cowboys, paraded their elegance of tailoring and displayed their addiction to whisky and the other alcoholic refinements of cosmopolitanism.

It was the most un-Italian of avenues and we left it as soon as we could find an apartment, which happened to be in the diplomatic quarter of the Via Bruxelles; within a few blocks of the Villa Taverna, which was the residence of the American ambassador, William Phillips. Across the street was the block acquired by Marshal Badoglio after his return from Ethiopia and there we saw his new villa take the palatial form

fitting to his equally new title of Duke of Addis Ababa. There, too, we were under the watchful eyes of Luigi, the portiere.

Luigi was a good portiere and a good Fascist. He never said so, but we soon were aware that he paid particular attention to our movements and the visits of our friends. Since all Rome's doormen hold their positions by grace of their affiliation with the secret police, I have no doubt that Luigi contributed weekly pages to the dossier which, I eventually learned, was kept on the Massock family.

In 1938 the visitors to the Via Bruxelles were mostly Americans, for Rome then had a sizable colony of diplomats and civilians from the United States. Cocktail parties were the social rule. It needed no excuse to convoke the Americans resident in Rome for two hours of noisy gossip, but often there was a tourist or two to be entertained. Tourists in that autumn always looked up the correspondents to inquire if war would break out before they could take a ship for home.

That year Mussolini's puppet parliament voted itself out of existence. The Duce had always detested electoral methods and parliaments. Deliberation, discussion, and argument were repugnant to his authoritarian and imperious disposition. They had been suppressed, even within his own party, since his attainment of absolute power. Only in form did he maintain the Chamber of Deputies until 1938. Then he scrapped it for a new Fascist Chamber.

The Fascist Grand Council abolished the Chamber of Deputies in a pronouncement October 8. It announced a substitute that was given the name of the Chamber of Fasces and Corporations, or Guilds. This body was to consist of certain officials of the Fascist party and of the twenty-two guilds which were supposed to represent industry, agriculture, the professions, and business. They were not elected, even by the members of the guilds they represented. All were appointees of the party and government, who held seats in the Chamber by

virtue of their positions. When a member, called a national councilman, was dismissed or transferred from his party or guild office, he automatically lost his seat in the Chamber to his successor.

Having no deliberative or critical function, the new Chamber was to meet only rarely, to hear a speech. What might be called its work, the routine ratification of the Duce's decrees, was performed by committees, which met occasionally to hear reports and approve them without dissent. The meetings were held in the imposing, white parliament building, formerly called Montecitorio from the name of the square it faced, off the Corso Umberto. With the advent of the new Chamber even the name Montecitorio was banished. The square eventually was renamed for Count Costanzo Ciano.

The Senate long had ceased to represent anything in Italy but an honorable retirement for dignitaries of the Fascist regime. Such pre-Fascist senators as Benedetto Croce, the great philosopher; Gaetano Mosca, the noted author of works on political theory; and Count Carlo Sforza, the foreign minister of postwar Italy, had been driven away by Fascism or retired because of it. Appointment to the Senate was made for life by the king, on recommendation of the prime minister. Now only the oldsters of Fascism were appointed, Mussolini deciding that only men over the age of sixty should have the honor. Because a Senate represents dignity, the Duce used to prefer to deliver his more important political addresses there. In later years he no longer bothered to speak before the graybeards.

The last act of the Chamber of Deputies was to ratify the government's anti-Semitic decrees by acclamation, December 14.

While the Jews were never persecuted in Italy as they were in Germany they suffered economically and in their civil rights. They had to exchange their land, buildings, securities, and department stores for government bonds, redeemable in

thirty years, which bore 4 per cent interest but were not transferable. They were excluded from most of the professions and from positions in the government service, the innumerable boards of the corporative system, and the many industries which were operated under government control.

It was estimated that fifteen thousand Jews lost their jobs. Many of them opened small shops as the only means of earning a livelihood. Others tried to get to France. Some went to the United States, including the doctor who delivered the babies of the royal family. He probably could have remained, since fifteen thousand Jewish families were exempted from the restrictions for special considerations. But many of these preferred to get away from even such petty discrimination as the requirement to carry "Hebrew" on their identity papers. For every personal document had to specify whether the person was "Aryan" or "Hebrew."

Jews were forbidden to marry "Aryan" Italians. A few who did were prosecuted. The Foreign Press Association lost a barman, Ali, under this section of the racial laws, although he was not a Jew. Ali was a rather dirty Arab from Libya. He was arrested for having an Italian wife. If he had been removed from behind the press club bar for reasons of hygiene we might have applauded the intervention. As it was, many of the correspondents felt sorry for Ali.

X

The Lambeth Walk

Some propagandist once upon a time hit upon the idea of putting little paper flags in the hands of children to be waved at distinguished visitors or returning heroes. He was probably a Japanese, for I understand the practice has been prevalent in Japan for some time. At any rate, it is customary in the totalitarian countries, when a particularly friendly statesman makes a formal visit, to mass the little boys and girls along the sidewalks, distribute bundles of flags of the statesman's country among them, and tell them to wave like good children.

When Chamberlain came to Rome with Lord Halifax in January, 1939, both the youngsters and their flags were conspicuous by their absence. Where Hitler saw the swastika everywhere the year before, the British guests saw only Italian flags. Since the Union Jack had been in little demand in Italy for several years it is unlikely that the Italians could find any British emblems to display.

Not that it made much difference. It was not as the hero of Munich that Chamberlain came. For the Italians that distinction was Mussolini's alone. Chamberlain, with his umbrella on his arm, came as a commercial traveler of the British Empire, anxious to sell the Duce a proposal to maintain the European status quo.

His trip was doomed to failure before he arrived. Mussolini was interested only in getting something out of France. The French were willing to pay something for peace, but not very much. If the Duce asked for it in the right tone of voice they might give Italy control of the railroad from Djibouti to

Addis Ababa, some shares in the Suez Canal, and a continuation of the special nationality concessions for the Italian residents of Tunisia.

But the French wanted no British "honest broker" as a go-between and they told Chamberlain to leave their problem out of the Rome talks. When Chamberlain and Halifax stopped off in Paris on the road to Rome, Daladier and Bonnet exacted a promise that they would not try to mediate the Italian claims on France. For one thing these demands had never been officially defined. The French felt that, since Italy had denounced the 1935 Laval-Mussolini accord, it was up to the Italians to approach them directly.

Chamberlain and Halifax arrived in the afternoon of January 11. They received the usual salute of a guard of honor and the greeting at the station of Mussolini and Ciano, as required by diplomatic ceremonial. There was even some genuinely spontaneous hand clapping among the Italians who lined the streets, but none of the government-inspired cheering or made-to-order enthusiasm of an Axis demonstration.

Hosts and guests went into conference within an hour. That evening we were told they had merely surveyed the general situation, made what in diplomatic lingo is called a tour of the horizon. That night, at a brilliant state banquet in the Palazzo Venezia, both Mussolini and Chamberlain invoked "peace with justice." The Duce did not specify just how he wanted the peace to come about, but Chamberlain said he hoped for "a just and peaceful solution of international difficulties by means of negotiation."

Chamberlain, speaking for Lord Halifax as well as himself, was not averse to dropping a warm compliment as a forerunner to the next day's conclusive conversations. "It is a real pleasure to both of us," he said, "to see with our own eyes the new Italy, powerful and aggressive, which has arisen under Your Excellency's guidance and inspiration."

Afterward the dinner guests, including high Fascist and

government officials, as well as the more pro-Fascist of the Italian aristocracy, emerged from the banquet hall and passed into the enormous, high-ceilinged salons of the palace, which had been the Austrian embassy before World War I. There five hundred lesser guests, including the press, had been convoked to provide a background of evening gowns and tail coats for the visitors until the stroke of midnight would free them of the social obligation of their trip.

Mussolini had laid aside the uniforms he preferred to wear, because a uniform flatters his dumpy figure, and appeared in a tail coat like everybody else except some of the top-rank Fascists, who showed up resplendent in uniforms with decorations. His evening suit was old-fashioned in its cut. He had put on weight with the years and his coat was held together at the front by two buttons on a string. Many of the guests, who saw him at close range for the first time, observed that a thick mole, the diameter of a dime, stuck out from the crown of his completely bald head.

He was not the colorful Duce, with flashing eyes and nervous movements, of the outdoor spectacles. He was a Napoleon in rusty black broadcloth, a Caesar in modern but out-of-date dress. He seemed to be a disappointed Caesar, for he stood in an attitude of scowling boredom, exchanging a few words now and then with the Fascist sycophants who clustered around him, while his two guests of honor were shown through the halls arranged as a museum of ancient armor and antique portraits.

The reason for this dissatisfied appearance became apparent the next day, after the formal discussions were concluded. The French had prevailed. Chamberlain announced that "no new commitments or agreements have either been asked for or entered into by either side."

The British had hoped to get Mussolini's agreement to withdraw Italian men, planes, and munitions from Spain. In the conversations they soon learned Italy would not withdraw

any more troops, but retained liberty of action to send additional help to Franco if the French sent troops to aid the Spanish Republicans in their resistance to Franco's forces that were driving on Barcelona.

When Chamberlain suggested that Italy negotiate with France on their quarrel Mussolini told him that any conciliation of it must await the end of the Spanish war. Until then, he said, there could be no question of "arbitration, mediation, four-power conferences, or even three-power conferences." The Spanish war "profoundly divided" France and Italy. All this was confirmed by a semiofficial statement from the Italian Foreign Ministry.

However divergent may be the views in diplomacy, the social amenities must be preserved. The British embassy, therefore, entertained Mussolini, Ciano, and the Fascist elite at a formal dinner in return for the Duce's first-night hospitality. As before, the dinner was followed by a reception for all those who had been invited to the Palazzo Venezia.

The British embassy building on the Via XX Settembre, while sufficiently elegant for the occasion, was also more conducive to party conviviality than the austere halls of the Duce's palace. Furthermore, the Scotch whisky and the French champagne were more potent than the orange-juice punch and Italian wine dispensed at Mussolini's party.

Mussolini and Ciano left early, but Edda Mussolini Ciano and the others stayed late. Long before midnight the ballroom of the embassy was a scene of gaiety. The Fascists, however aloof they might be from the British in politics, did not fail to join in the fun. Especially the secretary-general of the Fascist party, Achille Starace.

Starace was a Fascist from the movement's inception. He was a lieutenant general in the Blackshirt militia. His devotion to the Duce and the principles of Fascism was undisputable. His specialty was the training of the youth along Fascist lines, with an emphasis on athletics. He had kept himself slender and

lithe and he forced the minor chieftains of the party, many of them with jobholder paunches, to jump through flaming hoops in annual physical culture drills as an example to the younger generation.

Like Germany's Goering, Starace had a reputation for excessive vanity. It was a current story that one morning he appeared in Mussolini's office without the medals he always wore on his chest. "How does it happen, Achille, that you are not wearing your decorations?" the Duce asked. Starace looked hastily at the bare front of his tunic. "By Bacchus!" he exclaimed. "I forgot them. I must have left them on the coat of my pyjamas."

Starace also was supposed to be pro-German and anti-British. Only a few weeks before Chamberlain's visit he had passed out the word that Fascists were not to dance the Lambeth Walk, then the rage of Rome. He had the newspapers ridicule it as "a Negroid dance, fit only for a people whose princes knit," an obvious reference to the story that the Prince of Wales once knit sweaters.

In the British embassy the Fascist interdiction of the Lambeth Walk had no force. There was some apprehension among the more cautious of the guests, nevertheless, when the orchestra started to play the music for it. Then an amazing thing happened. Ian Munro, the mischievous Scottish correspondent of the London *Daily Mail*, clutched my arm and whispered, "Look at Starace."

The man second only to Mussolini in the Fascist party was jumping through the steps of the dance he had condemned. It was a Fascistized form of the dance, to be sure. At the point where the dancer raises his arms and jerks his thumbs backward with an "Oi!" Starace raised both arms in the Roman salute and shouted, "A noi!" the Fascist cry, while a square foot of medals bounced on the chest of his full-dress uniform.

If Mussolini had not left before this exhibition he might

have been less bored than he was at his own party. And Starace might have lost his job sooner than he did.

Chamberlain, as he left Rome with Halifax the next day, said, "We leave more than ever convinced of the good faith and good will of the Italian government."

Mussolini showed his good will almost immediately by turning on the hatred for France again.

He sent Ciano to Belgrade to entice Yugoslavia away from the French line-up into that of the Axis. He gave the Belgrade government a credit of a billion dinars, about $23,000,000, for the purchase of Italian goods. Yugoslavia was building roads and other public works with money borrowed from France. Ciano offered to let Belgrade have Italian engineers and machinery for the program. As a political concession he offered to guarantee Yugoslavia against any demand by Hungary for the return of Yugoslav territory which once belonged to that country. He could make such an offer, for Hungary was susceptible to Italian influence because Mussolini advocated revision of frontiers, such as Hungary's, that had been shortened by the peace treaties of the past war.

Ciano's aim was to eliminate French influence on the Adriatic side of Italy. On the other side of Italy the French were reacting to the Fascist propaganda onslaughts with more Gallic wit than caution. The French press touched the sorest spot on the sensitive Italian skin. It ridiculed the danger of a war with Italy by asserting the belief that it would take ten able-bodied Italians to lick one retired Frenchman. The Rome newspaper, *Il Tevere*, with rage, retorted that "forty-four million Italians spit in the face of the Third Republic."

Il Tevere was an unimportant sheet that appeared on the streets at noon each day and was hawked to a few thousand readers. It was subsidized by the German embassy and consequently was distinguished from the rest of the press only by a strong pro-German, anti-Semitic policy.

But the newspaper, in this instance, reflected the reaction of the Italians to the slurs on their valor.

In the next few weeks Mussolini stirred up a European crisis that had the men in the governments of Paris and London as nervous as cats. In a speech to prize-winning wheat growers he warned France that no matter how firm it might be, Italy would be firmer. His press began to grind out propaganda that would put the war guilt on France if shooting began. It arrived at a curious conclusion: Italy's increasing population gave it certain claims on France; the French must satisfy these claims, otherwise Italy would be justified in using force to gain satisfaction; in the latter case, France would be responsible for the failure to preserve peace.

Hitler backed this up with a declaration in the Reichstag that gave Mussolini a blank check. He said that if Italy was attacked, no matter what the motive, Germany would stand by her. France had no intention of attacking Italy and Hitler's embassy in Paris must have so informed him.

It was France and Great Britain, not Italy, that were on the defensive. Chamberlain told the House of Commons on February 6 that "any threat to the vital interests of France, from whatever quarter it came, must evoke the immediate co-operation of this country." The Italian Foreign Ministry, through an "Informazione Diplomatica," said this meant an Anglo-French military alliance. Italy's reply would be more and better armaments. Mussolini held three days of secret consultations with his Supreme Defense Council, in which Italy's armed forces were thoroughly reviewed. Further to frighten the French in the war of nerves the Duce began to bring Italian settlers back from Tunisia.

Yet the knowledge that Italy was too weak to fight a major power was ever before Mussolini. That and the knowledge that his people were in no mood for war. They would have fought if he had ordered it, but they would have done it unwillingly. Mussolini and the king knew the sentiments and

the needs of the Italian people. When Vittorio Emanuele read a speech from the throne to the 682 members of the new Fascist Chamber at its first session March 23, he said:

"To develop the resources of her Empire, Italy, although not lulling herself with delusions of perpetual peace, desires peace to last as long as possible."

Fascist economy was never geared, however, to the development of Ethiopia. Instead, it was devoted more and more exclusively to the replenishment of planes, tanks, guns, and munitions for war.

"Woe to the weak," Mussolini shouted in a speech to 250,000 Blackshirts. For the first time, the Duce himself named Tunisia, Djibouti, and the Suez Canal as the problems to be negotiated between Italy and France.

"No matter how things go, we wish to hear no more about brotherhood, sisterhood, cousins, and such other bastard relationships," he said, "because relationships between states are relations of force."

He did say the fall of Madrid would remove the barricade between Italy and France. It was almost as though he had relented since the fall of Barcelona in January, which he had hailed as a Fascist victory over Republican Spain and a good augury for future triumphs in the new Europe. Then he had told a hasty demonstration of Fascists, "The watchword of the Reds was 'no pasaran, they shall not pass.' We have passed and I tell you we shall pass."

Fascism had defeated democracy in Spain. Great Britain and France surrendered their positions in the diplomatic war in February when they saw that Madrid would fall, and they recognized Franco's insurgent government. Mussolini's *Popolo d'Italia* gloated, "The game is lost. France and Britain finally have been forced to throw overboard the Red government which they supported for so long."

When Madrid surrendered to Franco, March 28, another

demonstration of twenty thousand persons was staged under Mussolini's balcony. This time he said:

"Comrades, Franco's infantry and our legionaries have entered Madrid. The Spanish war is over. This means the defeat of Bolshevism. Thus will finish all the enemies of Italy and of Fascism."

The French, who previously had asked themselves if the Italians intended "to pass" on French soil, now asked themselves if they were considered an enemy of Italy and Fascism. The answer was obvious, for the crowd had shouted, "Tunisia, Tunisia!" under Mussolini's balcony.

In the French embassy in Rome was a special attaché whose only job was to maintain a long-standing personal friendship with the Duce. He was Hubert Lagardelle, an old radical who had known Mussolini when they both were Socialists. He could still converse with the Duce in the second person singular. Lagardelle picked up the information that Italy would be willing to negotiate with France if suitable overtures were made by the French government. Although Lagardelle usually worked independently of the ambassador, he had the approval of François-Poncet to hurry to Paris on an urgent mission to convey his information. The time was all the riper for negotiations, the ambassador thought, because the Spanish war was ended, removing that focal point of ideological dispute. Furtheremore, the Italians had suffered 3,064 killed, 10,708 wounded in the war, and had lost 580 missing or taken prisoners, twice as many casualties as in Ethiopia.

Nothing came of this urgent mission. Daladier was firm in the contention that the Italians must approach the French if they wanted anything. And they had better not ask too much.

There matters stood in the spring, so far as Italy was concerned. Hitler had completed the rape of Czechoslovakia. He had belied Mussolini's open letter to Runciman that Hitler did not want the Czechs.

When a disillusioned Chamberlain bitterly denounced the German seizure of Czechoslovakia, incidentally, the Italian newspapers gave one of the most glaring demonstrations of the distortion of news by omission. The only version of the speech which the government allowed the official Stefani agency to circulate and the newspapers to publish omitted Chamberlain's catalogue of Hitler's broken promises, Chamberlain's disappointment and indignation, the secret police outrages in Czechoslovakia, the concentration camp procedure, the statement that Czech disorders were fomented from without, Chamberlain's scorn for the German pretence that Czechoslovakia was a menace to Germany. No wonder there was no informed opinion among the Italian public. That was why, perhaps, the mass of Italians remained indifferent to the death agony of Czechoslovakia.

Now Hitler was building up a similar case against Poland to get Danzig and Poland's corridor to the Baltic, as he had begun by demanding the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia. As before, he had tried to use Italy as a catspaw. Ciano went to Warsaw in February on a mission which, if successful, would serve both of the Axis partners. He wanted to cut Poland loose from France.

If Ciano had succeeded he would have softened Poland for Hitler's eventual pressure and he would have weakened France's position as a preliminary to the presentation of the Italian demands. The trip was not a success.

Ciano's bait was a proposal that Poland could share with the Axis powers in the colonizing of Africa when they induced the British and the French to make colonial concessions in the interests of peace. But Poland's foreign minister, Colonel Josef Beck, told Ciano that Poland would remain loyal to France and not support the German bid for colonies. He remembered Hitler planned to create a great vassal Ukrainian state and regain the territory Germany had lost in the First World War. That meant the partition of Poland.

Ciano left Poland with the shouts of "Down with Germany" from the throats of anti-Nazi rioters ringing in his ears.

Shortly afterward, Hitler punctured Chamberlain's rosy dream of appeasement with the occupation of Czechoslovakia. The British and the French pledged themselves to aid Poland if that country was forced to resist a Nazi attack.

It was a difficult situation for Fascist Italy. Mussolini wanted to join Hitler in shaking down the owners and protectors of international property. The world expected him to move against France. At home his prestige was shaken by his empty-handedness after every Nazi coup. The Ethiopian and Spanish wars had demanded sacrifices of the patient, industrious, good-natured Italians. The cost of the wars was impoverishing the middle and wealthy classes. It was Italy's turn to get something out of the Axis.

Yet Mussolini could not even make formal demands on France. He lacked the arms to back them up and such essential supplies for modern war as oil reserves. So Mussolini had to back down. Without giving up their claims the Blackshirts must shout in vain for Tunisia, Corsica, Djibouti, Suez, Savoy, and Nice. The Ides of March passed without the start of the much-prophesied World War II. It had to be postponed.

Italy had to hit somebody smaller. Geographical propinquity made that somebody Albania.

XI

The Two Romes

A partial observer on the banks of the Tiber, with no claim to objectivity, might say, with some reason, that the greatest victim of Fascism in 1939 was not Albania, but the Supreme Pontiff of the Holy Roman Church, the Vicar of Christ on Earth, Pope Pius XI.

For those of us who stick to the official statements of medical reports the cause of the Pope's death was the failure of a heart weakened by cardiac asthma. How much that heart was weakened by the Nazi persecution of the Catholic Church in Germany and especially by concern at the differences between the Church and the Fascist State in Italy must remain a matter of conjecture.

Pius XI, who was christened Achille Ratti, was old and ailing in the winter of 1938 and 1939. He suffered three heart attacks in November that caused his household to despair of his life. But he refused to rest. In defiance of his physician, Doctor Aminta Milani, His Holiness had himself helped from his bed to a chair and received his cardinals in audience as usual. He said, "The pope must be pope and not stay in bed."

In February, though, he was forced to take to his bed with what seemed a mild case of influenza. This time he had a very important purpose in conserving what strength remained in his body, enfeebled after eighty-one years of study, mountain-climbing, diplomacy, scholarship, priesthood, and the tremendous cares that come with the spiritual leadership of 330 million inhabitants of the earth.

February 11 would be the tenth anniversary of the Lateran peace, which he negotiated with the Italian government in

1929, one of the most remarkable political achievements of modern times. It had settled the "Roman Question" after fifty-nine years of estrangement between Church and State, ever since the troops of the new Kingdom of Italy marched into Rome on September 20, 1870, and deprived the popes of their temporal power.

The Lateran accord was the greatest single diplomatic achievement of the Fascist government. It healed the rift in the conscience of the nation, which had been divided in its loyalty to pope and king, so that the king was enabled to say, in the Crown speech at the inauguration of parliament on April 20, 1929, that the spiritual unity of Italy had been obtained for the first time.

Yet there had been stormy conflicts between the Church and Fascism, even after the peace. When one difference was dispelled another cropped up. A new issue had arisen between the Vatican and the Palazzo Venezia, that of Fascist Italy's Nazi-inspired racial program which encroached on one of the Church's most zealously-guarded prerogatives, the performance of matrimony.

As one of the most stalwart defenders of the Church's position who ever sat in the throne of Peter, and as a man who decried persecution of any kind, Pius XI felt obliged to make known what he thought of the status of relations between his beloved Italy and the Vatican. He had summoned all the bishops of Italy to come to Rome and hear a speech on the anniversary. To the pontiff, it was all-important that he be able to deliver that speech. The discourse, alas, was never given. His indomitable will could prevail no longer over the weakness of illness and age. The effort was too much for his stricken heart.

At 5:31 on the morning of February 10, just before a gray dawn began to streak the purple sky of Rome, the 261st Pope of the Roman Church, Pius XI, murmured, "We have so much to do," and sighed out his soul.

One by one the cardinals in their purple robes arrived at the death chamber. The age-old formalities of certifying the pope's death were concluded. The big bell of St. Peter's Basilica boomed throughout the city its dolefully measured toll.

Pius XI was hardly buried in his triple coffin in the crypt under St. Peter's when Ansaldo, in Ciano's *Il Telegrafo*, expressed the Italian government's preference for Elia Cardinal Dalla Costa, Archbishop of Florence, to succeed to the papal throne. Ansaldo named Cardinal Dalla Costa as a Prince of the Church who had not meddled in politics.

After the Lateran accord the Church and State were practically free of each other and religion was less political in power and influence than it had ever been.

The capture of Rome, then the temporal as well as the spiritual seat of the pope, had made him a prisoner in the Vatican. The accord solved the situation by a concordat, a political treaty, and a financial settlement. The concordat reaffirmed the declaration of the Italian Constitution that "the Roman Catholic and Apostolic religion is the sole religion of the State." It reduced the number of bishops. It required that all the bishops in Italy must be approved by the government and take an oath of loyalty to the Italian State. The treaty recognized the "absolute independence" of the Holy See and its sovereign jurisdiction over the hundred-acre Vatican City. Under the financial agreement Italy undertook to pay a cash indemnity of 750,000,000 lire and a billion lire more in 5 per cent government bonds.

This historic settlement was arrived at only after profound reflection and study on both sides. The negotiations were drawn out over months and even years before the documents were finally signed by Mussolini and the Vatican's secretary of state, Cardinal Gasparri. Yet the result soon was a series of bitter controversies. The Fascist party's monopoly on the

youth organizations and the government's control of education were the cause.

Mussolini had been anxious to gain, through the accord, the political support of the Catholics. He had caused an abrupt suspension of the negotiations for a year, however, by dissolving the Catholic Boy Scout organizations. In the end the pope reluctantly accepted this action and the negotiations were carried to a satisfactory conclusion.

But the controversy continued in the years immediately afterward. The Church freely criticized the moral aspects of Fascist policy and sought to maintain its youth organizations. The government resented what it called the intervention of the Church in political affairs. The Fascists attacked particularly the organization known as Catholic Action.

Catholic Action, a lay organization, was especially dear to the heart of Pius XI. It has branches in various countries of the world. The powerful Italian branch has many subsidiaries, concerned with education and social welfare.

Fascism was jealous of Catholic Action, as it was of any institutions not dependent on the government. Its keynote was, "Everything within the state, nothing outside the state." At the height of the conflict Fascist gangs raided the Catholic Action headquarters almost daily. The furnishings were destroyed, portraits of the pope thrown into the street.

One of the most outspoken of the popes, Pius XI issued an encyclical that summed up Fascist doctrine and practice as a revival of "pagan worship of the state." He refused to give way. In this case it was Mussolini who gave in and reluctantly consented to recognize the organizations dependent on Catholic Action in return for an assurance their activities would not involve party politics. Four former leaders of the Catholic Popular Party of Don Luigi Sturzo, the Sicilian priest, had become local directors of Catholic Action. They had to go.

On the right of the state to educate children it was Mus-

solini who refused to give way. From the tender years at which he joined the Fascist youth organization as a Son of the Wolf, named from the legend of the wolf that nursed Romulus and Remus, the young Italian was drilled to believe the interests of the state were supreme and took precedence over all considerations of the individual and the family.

"In this matter," Mussolini declared before the Chamber of Deputies, "we are intractable. Teaching must be ours."

The pope in the Vatican answered, "On this point, we do not wish to say that we are intractable, because among other things intractability is not a virtue." Here it was the pope who gave in.

On September 2, 1931, the pope and the Duce made peace. Mussolini gave the Church the right to have priests in the schools and chaplains with the Fascist organizations. The Church agreed that Catholic Action should refrain from any political activity.

Thus, by 1932, a practical working compromise was reached, under which both Church and State claimed moral authority and the people supported both irreconcilables.

When the quarrel was over, Mussolini arranged an audience with the pope through Father Tacchi-Venturi, a Jesuit priest in his confidence, who had figured behind the scenes in the Lateran negotiations. It was the first official visit of an Italian minister to the head of the Church.

While a fashionable crowd was held back at a safe distance Mussolini drove out of the Palazzo Venezia, alone in a closed car. Through its windows could be glimpsed his rarely worn uniform of prime minister, a tail coat of black broadcloth heavily embroidered with gold braid and a boat-shaped hat with ostrich feathers. He wore two of the most coveted decorations in Europe, the Collar of the Annunciation, which allowed him to address the king as cousin, and the Golden Spur, sent to him by the pope a few days before. Six motor cars followed. In the first four rode the other

cabinet ministers. The last two were full of frock-coated policemen.

From Vatican gossips eventually came a story of what took place when the prefect of the papal palace closed the door of the pope's private library. Mussolini thanked His Holiness for the Golden Spur. Pius XI broke the ice by mentioning the good results of the Lateran accord. Then they talked an hour, presumably with the frankness that characterized both men.

For a time afterward they were on friendly terms. There are some who say the Church encouraged the Italian women to give up their wedding rings as a protest against sanctions in the Ethiopian war, that the Vatican sent word to the rural clergy that the Fascist youth movement must not be opposed.

But in 1938 the new anti-Semitism of the Fascist regime again gave rise to friction between the pope and Mussolini, while the Fascist press again sniped at Catholic Action.

In August, Fascist Secretary Starace and Lamberto Vignoli, president of Catholic Action, reaffirmed the stipulation of September, 1931, on Catholic Action's role in the Fascist state. This was that Catholic Action should not take an active part in politics or display any banner but that of the state, and its leaders should not be opponents of the regime. The reaffirmation meant that opposition to the new anti-Semitic racial doctrine would cause the clause to be invoked.

This did not deter the pope in the least from contesting the right of the Fascist state to forbid the mixed marriages of Jews with so-called Aryan Italians and punish any who contracted or performed such marriages. The concordat specified that marriages celebrated by a priest should be recognized by the civil authorities. The Vatican held to the view that in Italy the propriety of a marriage was a matter for the Church to decide. It felt that the restraint practiced by the Catholic Church everywhere in allowing mixed marriages was sufficient to satisfy any moral consideration.

Pius XI consequently told four hundred Italian teachers in an audience at his hillside summer villa on the Alban lake at Castel Gandolfo that the anti-Semitic doctrine "concerns a great and serious error, which touches the steps of the altar, and touches Catholic doctrine."

On his return to Vatican City the pontiff sat down in his private library, literally took up his pen, and wrote in his fine, scholarly hand two "paternal" letters, one to Mussolini, the other to the king. He appealed to them to refrain from the promulgation of the anti-Semitic decrees. Only the king replied. He promised the "greatest consideration" would be given to the pope's objections. It was a vain promise and the pope's was a futile appeal. The legislation became effective.

The Fascist party, in the meantime, showed its irritation at the Vatican mixing in where it considered the state to be supreme.

The pope, in his last Christmas Eve address to the cardinals, was obliged to say that Catholic Action was being molested everywhere in Italy. The "zeal in the lower ranks" of those responsible for the annoyances made it appear "too clear," he said, that "from above must come occult gestures of permission and encouragement." The Fascist decrees forbidding the marriage of Jews and Aryans, he said again, violated the concordat and caused "real and serious preoccupation to the head of Catholicism and the custodian of morality and truth."

As for Catholic Action, the pope said, its headquarters and archives had been raided at Venice, Turin, Bergamo, and Milan. It was the story of 1931 over again. It must be recognized, the pope insisted, that Catholic Action was not in politics or in "undesired competition" with the Fascist regime.

No Fascist authority ever denied the pope's assertions. Under the efficient stifling by the propaganda ministry, the press maintained an oyster silence. But the pope's protest was read by the tens of thousands of Italians who bought the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano.*

Most of us in Rome gave credence to the word that leaked out of the Vatican after the death of Pius XI that the undelivered speech he left on his desk was a strong denunciation of the Fascist violations of the Lateran accord. Prelates of the secretary of state's office destroyed all the copies of the document as soon as His Holiness was declared dead. How much the sorrow and the strain of composing it in the hours of night, that should have been devoted to absolute rest, contributed to the failure of his already impaired heart, nobody will ever know.

When the Italian government had a funeral mass celebrated in the church of Sant' Andrea della Valle for the soul of Pius XI, Mussolini was one of the few who did not kneel during the service. In 1931, when he visited the pope, he knelt in St. Peter's and remained for some time as though lost in prayer. So his failure to perform the sign of devotion at the funeral mass could not have been because he considered the act to be incompatible with the dignity of the Duce. Perhaps it was because the stone floor of the church was cold and there was no cushion to insulate his knees.

The Conclave of Cardinals that elected the new pope was one of the shortest ever. It lasted two days. The tradition of centuries requires that the result of each ballot in the secret electoral chamber in the Sistine Chapel be announced by a wisp of smoke from a chimney, black smoke from smoldering damp straw means that no cardinal obtained the requisite majority of the votes, white smoke from dry twigs mixed with the ballots is the signal that a pope has been elected.

In 1939, for the first time, the radio, as well as the smoke, was used to announce the election. But because the smoke signal might conceivably beat the radio announcer to the air, it was necessary to have a lookout. This we established in a third-floor priest's cell in the rectory of a small and ancient church across the vast Piazza Rusticucci in front of St.

Peter's. We installed there a radio, typewriters, and a telephone with a line open all the way to London.

The afternoon of March 2, I sat at the window with the telephone transmitter in one hand, watching the chimney, while another AP correspondent, Charlie Kline, gazed intently through a pair of binoculars. At 5:28 a puff of white smoke, as thin as vapor, arose from the chimney. At the same moment the Vatican radio broadcast the news to the world.

Almost immediately the people of Rome began to run into the square. They came by motor car, by taxi, afoot. Soon a tremendous throng filled the space between the elliptical colonnades. It was a striking demonstration of the difference in Italian loyalties to the Duce and the pope. To get a crowd to assemble under Mussolini's balcony, orders had to be given. Nobody summoned the Romans to cheer the new pope.

Forty minutes after the smoke puff Camillo Cardinal Caccia Dominioni, dean of the cardinal deacons, appeared on the balcony over the doors of St. Peter's and, speaking through microphones, proclaimed the new pope in Latin:

"I give you tidings of great joy; we have a pope"—the tense crowd cheered—"the most eminent and reverend Cardinal Eugene—" tremendous cheers, for there was only one Italian cardinal named Eugene—"Pacelli, who has taken upon himself the name of Pius XII."

From within the basilica, a choir sang the papal anthem. Priests in the square struck up an impromptu Te Deum.

Soon, in the shadows of the winter dusk, the tall, thin figure of Pius XII appeared on the balcony and he imparted his first apostolic benediction on the waiting multitude and the world.

The cardinals had failed to give the Italian Foreign Ministry its choice for pope. Instead they had elected the foreign minister of the Vatican, as Cardinal Pacelli was, in the office of the secretary of state. Italians immediately speculated on

the extent to which he would get along with Fascism. The *Giornale d'Italia*, speaking for the Italian Foreign Ministry, said in its extra edition, "No one can imagine that there will be any possible change in the policy of the Church's government."

The new pope, elected on his sixty-third birthday, was born in Rome, which made the capital of Italy, as well as the seat of Catholicism, all the more dear to him. He was primarily and temperamentally a supreme diplomat, with the ways of a diplomat in treating with governments. He was said to have been a member, in his youth, of the now exiled Don Sturzo's Christian Popular Party. Yet he had loyally executed the Lateran pacts. He knew Germany well from having served at Munich as papal nuncio to Bavaria during and after World War I, until the German revolutionaries forced him to leave his house there. All these factors must be kept in mind when one considers the relation of Pius XII with the Italian government.

The day after his election, His Holiness broadcast an appeal for peace as his first public pronouncement.

To the Italian king's message of congratulations, the pope replied, "We are happy to express to Your Majesty and to Her Majesty, the Queen Empress, the prayers which, on the threshhold of our pontificate, we raise to God for their welfare and for the Christian prosperity of our most dear Italian nation."

Mussolini sent a message of "reverent homage" and the pope invoked "divine aid" on him. The pope's advocacy of "peace in Justice," which is "the fruit of charity," pleased the Italians.

The pope's coronation was carried out March 12 with all the brilliance of ecclesiastic pomp and ceremony of which the Catholic Church is so richly capable. Many of the humbler Italians brought loaves of bread and bottles of wine to sustain them through the ceremony that lasted five hours.

Finally the pope, his long, thin, ascetic face paler than usual, was borne to a platform six feet high on the outdoor balcony of Saint Peter's and the golden tiara was imposed on his head. His reign had officially begun.

To succeed him as secretary of state, the pope appointed Luigi Cardinal Maglione, who as papal nuncio to Paris had consulted with Laval and was reputed in the world press to have encouraged the Hoare-Laval proposal to end the Ethiopian war.

Pius XII was embarked, from the start, on a policy of endeavoring to pacify the nations of the world, without interfering in their political quarrels. It was his most earnest hope that Italy, in any event, would stay out of the conflict. How he was sorely disappointed in that hope, we shall eventually see.

XII

Private Lives

Shortly after Chamberlain left Rome a rumor spread throughout the city that Mussolini, already a grandfather, had again become a father, this time to the child of a young woman the Duce had established in a villa the previous year.

Housemaids gossiped about it in their kitchens and diplomats in their chancellories. The diplomats speculated among themselves as to whether the not-too-happy event might not have been the cause of the prime minister's seeming preoccupation when he was entertaining his British guests.

Much has been written about the love life of the dictator. Some of the stories have been invented and some of them are malicious gossip. Mussolini himself has made it difficult to distinguish between the facts and the rumors because he undeniably supplied plenty of material for the scandal-lovers.

If Mussolini had been an emperor of pagan Rome he could hardly have worshiped less assiduously at a marble temple of Venus than he has at the fleshly one. It may even be that the Italians, warmed by the Mediterranean sun, found him more humanly acceptable for this trait, which marked him as a full-blooded man. The English historian, Thomas Hodgkin, records that the Romans of some fifteen hundred years ago had no respect for the Consul Eutropius, an old and ugly eunuch of faded prettiness and effeminate voice, who was sent to them from the court of Constantinople in 399. They were ashamed that a wrinkled castrato, "who had combed the hair of his mistress and fanned her with peacock's feathers, sat on the chair of Brutus, was preceded by lictors with fasces, and affected to command the armies of Rome."

Mussolini gave the modern Romans no reason for shame on that score. Nor was he fish-blooded as his fellow dictator, Hitler, was supposed to be. Like a number of his younger subordinates in Fascism he always had an appreciative eye for the feminine figure. He never sublimated the sex instinct in his work. Instead, in the later years, psychologists might have found in Mussolini's persistent application to amatory prowess an aging man's attempt to maintain the illusion of youthful virility.

A dictator's sex life is important only in so far as its influence on the man affects the people. It would be difficult to argue that Mussolini's amours had more than the most superficial effect on him, not to mention the Italian people. They did, however, indicate a facet of the character of the man who presumed to fix the destiny of a nation of forty-five million persons.

More than that, there were some diplomats in Rome who seriously expressed to me the belief that Mussolini had let the extremist, pro-German wing of the Fascist party involve Italy too deeply with Nazi Germany, because either he was distracted from the affairs of state by his current infatuation, as some suggested, or was suffering from a softening of the brain induced by his exertions, as others contended. So far as I was able to learn, that was sheer nonsense.

Mussolini first saw the young woman of the reputed 1939 motherhood at Terminilla, a small, popular winter resort in the mountains near Rome. Although her name was on every tongue in Rome afterward, she may as well remain anonymous here. She was the daughter of a doctor and the wife of an aviator. Mussolini used to motor to Terminilla for a day or two of skiing. Just how the Duce arranged the introduction and prevailed on the girl to accept his attentions is not generally known, but in view of his position one may well assume that it was an easy conquest. The husband could hardly protest without possibly incurring more painful distress than the

wound to his honor. Besides, it was the talk that his offended feelings were salved by promotion in the army and assignment to Ethiopia.

The young lady became a sort of Pompadour of Rome, which meant, in the American parlance, that she was somewhat of a gold digger. She took good care, not only of her own fortunes, but those of her family. Soon articles on medical matters of little interest to the layman began to appear at infrequent intervals in a morning newspaper, over the name of her father. He was said to receive five thousand lire whenever he felt inclined to write one of them, which was not often. That was only $250 in foreign exchange, but a sizable fee by Italian standards. Since the newspaper was widely believed to be the least Fascist of the press, it may be that the editor was obliged to buy the pieces for his sins.

For herself, the mistress obtained the villa on Monte Mario, in a fashionable suburb. It was luxuriously furnished and eventually Mussolini had an escalator installed in it to avoid taxing his heart when he climbed to the boudoir on his visits. The girl also enjoyed the privilege of almost unlimited charge accounts in the luxury shops. I use the "almost" advisedly, because of an incident that was reported to have occurred in a jewelry store. One day she entered the Rome equivalent of a Tiffany's or Cartier's, where she often bought baubles, and was welcomed with the deference due a good customer and her own unique status. On this visit, however, her fancy called for a much more expensive jewel than she had ever purchased theretofore. She selected the most costly pearl necklace in the house, said she would take it with her, and imperiously instructed the clerk to send the bill to the Palazzo Venezia. The clerk called the manager and he, poor fellow, was assailed by a doubt as to whether the great man with an office in the palace would be willing to pay such a price for the whim of his favorite. The manager discreetly telephoned to the palace and got the private secretary of the Duce,

Doctor Oswaldo Sebastiani, on the wire. The secretary, asked for confirmation of the purchase, likewise was dubious. He suggested the young woman be advised to wait for a few days. When the manager informed her of this, the girl demanded the telephone, dialed Mussolini's unlisted number, and spoke directly to the Duce. What she said was not repeated in the report that got around afterward, but in a few minutes Doctor Sebastiani appeared with the price of the necklace in thousand-lire banknotes.

Eventually the Duce transferred his affections to a German girl, then to another flier's wife, and later to two young sisters, one of whom he installed in the customary villa and the other sent to Switzerland for the treatment of her lungs.

Fickleness characterized his relationships with women from the days of his Swiss exile and his friendship with Angelica Balabanoff. After Mussolini's desertion of Socialism separated them Madame Balabanoff related the story of Irene Desler, with whom Mussolini lived for two years prior to 1915, and who bore him a son. Irene Desler accused Mussolini of deserting her. A native of Trento, then under Austrian rule, she was imprisoned in Milan and in 1917 was placed in a concentration camp.

After the March on Rome an outstanding friend of Mussolini was Margherita Sarfatti, a brilliant woman who became the amanuensis of the Duce. She wrote an official biography of him, in which she quoted him as telling her, "I want to make a mark on history with my will, like a lion with his claws." After the inevitable break in their friendship little was heard of her until, at the time of the anti-Semitic campaign, it was reported that she had gone to France to live.

Another woman journalist of lesser note made a diplomatic incident, with gunplay, of her acquaintanceship with Mussolini. In 1937, as Count Charles de Chambrun, French ambassador to Italy, stepped from the Rome Express in the Gare de Lyon of Paris, an attractive young Frenchwoman approached

him, drew a pistol from her handbag, and fired it point-blank at the diplomat, wounding him. In the subsequent investigation, she proudly told the following story:

She was Madame la Ferrière, who had been a small-time actress and wrote under the name of Magda Fontanges. She had gone to Rome to interview Mussolini for a Paris newspaper. The Duce not only had accorded her the interview but had made love to her. In a very brief time, however, she found the entrance to the Palazzo Venezia barred to her as to any ordinary stranger. Going to the French embassy, she found no sympathy, but rather advice to clear out of Italy. Back in Paris she decided that it was not Mussolini but the ambassador who had prevented her seeing the Duce further. The pistol shot had been her revenge. Apparently she had never heard that Mussolini was once supposed to have said, "No man should ever take a woman seriously."

In contrast with these stories of his emotional life Mussolini was, to a certain extent, a family man. He was visibly fond of his acknowledged children, married their peasant mother after he became prime minister and let her become the symbol, far in the background, of domestic respectability.

Nobody knows how much Donna Rachele Mussolini heard of the rumors that linked her husband's name with other women. She never gave any sign that she was aware of them. She was the perfect, self-effacing wife for a man of Mussolini's temperament and meteoric career. If it is true that he travels fastest who travels alone then Mussolini was unhampered by a wife in his rise to power. He traveled up the scale alone.

Rachele Guidi was a placid peasant servant girl who washed the dishes and made the beds in his father's country inn on the outskirts of Forli when Mussolini met her in 1910. She was born in the hut of her father, Agostino Guidi, a farm hand who died early, leaving her mother, Anna, to bring her up as best she could. Rachele had to leave school at the age of eight and go to work for what miserable wages she could

earn. Except for a few months spent as a servant in Rimini she passed her youth in the country, hiring herself out to farmers for work about the house.

In 1905, Mussolini's blacksmith father changed occupations and opened a fourth-rate inn on the outskirts of Forli, called L'Agnello (The Lamb), which catered exclusively to laborers and cart drivers. Anna Guidi was hired as cook and Rachele as the maid-of-all-work. It was thus that Mussolini found her when he returned after his expulsion from Switzerland. He was attracted to her and she fell violently in love with him. He was 27, she 20. In 1912, after Mussolini's brief venture in Austria as a Socialist editor, Rachele went with him to Milan, when he went to edit *Avanti*!

They lived together for ten troubled years, excepting when Mussolini was twice in prison and the year he was in the army at the front. Edda was born in Milan shortly after their arrival, Vittorio in 1916, and Bruno in 1917.

When Mussolini made his March on Rome he left Rachele and the children in Milan, where they lived like a lower middle-class family, keeping a single servant, the mother accompanying the children to school each day. It was not until 1925 that Mussolini brought them to Rome, some say at the suggestion of the king that a little regularity in the prime minister's family would look better. Mussolini gave up the two-room apartment he had in the Palazzo Tittoni and took up residence in the ample Villa Torlonia. He called in a priest and they were married. Romano was born shortly after that, and then Anna Maria.

In the sumptuous villa, surrounded by a whole block of grounds, with palm trees, gardens, riding enclosure, tennis courts, and servants' lodges, behind high walls, Signora Mussolini kept to her peasant habits, although she had acquired the noble title of Donna by marriage to the chief of state.

Donna Rachele helped in her kitchen, sometimes cooking the Duce's spaghetti for him, and every morning fed a flock

of chickens in the back yard. Around the house she wore heavy shoes and a coarse apron over a plain skirt and blouse.

Her children and her home have been Donna Rachele's only interests. In recent years she has appeared occasionally, in the Fascist woman's uniform, at the dedication of an old folk's home or similar ceremony, usually near the Mussolini summer residence at Riccioni on the Adriatic. In Rome she lets the queen visit the hospitals and perform such duties customarily reserved to royalty.

Donna Rachele never appeared in society. Whatever official dinners Mussolini was obliged to give, he gave in hotels, restaurants, or in his Palazzo Venezia. His wife was never present. She never entertained. It was not for want of invitation that she was never seen in the houses of the aristocracy, but because she realized she would feel out of place, a stranger if not an inferior, in the social set of Rome.

When she passed, unrecognized, on the street, she was a matronly figure, in fashionable clothes, with expertly dressed hair and manicured hands. She showed that her daughter, the fashionable Countess Edda Ciano, had taken her in hand, even seeing to it that the mother took a reducing cure to restrain her tendency to stoutness.

Donna Rachele spent much time in educating herself and reading, after she came to Rome, but she continued to speak in the Romagna dialect. She seldom had occasion to display intellectual attainments. Aside from her children's tutors, music teacher, gymnastic instructor, and riding master, who were regarded almost as members of the family, the few visitors she saw were friends and acquaintances of her former days. Her most intimate friend was Mussolini's sister, Edvige.

Mussolini let the story be widely circulated that he dined at home every evening in the bosom of the family, surrounded by the quiet domestic atmosphere of his household, the soothing and sympathetic company of his wife, the affection of his

children, the relaxation that took his mind from politics and gave him new strength for another day. It made a pretty picture of family life and domestic felicity as an example to the people of what a good, Fascist life should be. But he must have had quite a few nights out.

Mussolini has shown himself in public and in his writings as genuinely fond of his children. He was distressed when Anna Maria was gravely ill with meningitis in 1937. He let his sons, Vittorio and Bruno, choose attractive wives of good middle-class families. He attended their weddings, went to the airfield, and kissed them lovingly when they returned from air-bombing Ethiopians and Spaniards in the wars.

Edda was considered in Rome to be the most intelligent of Mussolini's children. His sons attained good positions, Vittorio as head of the motion-picture industry, Bruno as president of the airline to South America. One saw them occasionally in the restaurants and at boxing matches, where nobody paid much attention to them. Whatever their qualifications for employment they probably needed no help from their father in obtaining their positions, since such a sycophantic system as Fascism automatically brings favors to the family of the chief. Romano and Anna Maria, as school children, always won prizes in their classes.

About a month after Chamberlain's visit to Rome one of the alert members of the Fascist militia, in civilian clothes, who patrolled the streets around the Villa Torlonia, observed a man loitering in the Via Nomentana near the entrance to the estate. The militiaman approached and demanded to see the man's identity papers. For answer, the individual pulled a pistol from his pocket, fired, and wounded the militiaman in the abdomen. Other secret police agents rushed up and arrested the assailant.

He was identified as Bruno Simoni, 38 years old, a mechanic of near Bologna. The police tried to hush up the incident,

but there had been witnesses, so of course the news spread throughout Rome like wildfire. Under questioning by the correspondents the propaganda ministry at first denied the incident had taken place, then confirmed it as "the irresponsible act of a madman." Officials said the man had been released twice from insane asylums at Naples and Rome. What happened to him after his arrest never became known. Once he was taken to Regina Coeli prison he disappeared completely from public ken, like several other would-be assassins of Mussolini in the past.

An Italian whose reports on police cases had always been reliable told me the man had confessed he was waiting for Mussolini to leave the villa in his automobile after lunch to return to his office. He intended to fire on the Duce. When the policeman accosted him and asked for his "documents" the man had pulled the pistol and fired, saying, "Here they are, take them to your master."

Only Mussolini and a few of his officials know how many attempts on his life were thwarted in a similar manner and covered up.

Mussolini was the most carefully protected man in Italy, not excepting the king. One of the first acts of his regime was to issue a decree making his person as inviolable as those of the king, the queen, and the crown prince, with the death penalty fixed for those guilty of attempts against him.

The safety of both the Duce and the king was guarded by a special corps of 350 plainclothes men attached to their persons. Whenever the king rode in to the Quirinale Palace from the Villa Savoia, at the edge of Rome, where the royal family lived, the streets through which his car passed would be peopled with guards strung about half a block apart. It was not very noticeable at first, but living as I did within a block of the Villa Savoia and driving my car over the same streets I soon came to recognize the men from an indefinable uniformity of bearing and their habit of reading newspapers while they

stood stock still in the middle of the sidewalk waiting for His Majesty to pass.

The streets through which Mussolini's car passed from the Villa Torlonia to the Palazzo Venezia were guarded in the same way. The route was changed every day. The Duce was more difficult to shield from attack than the king for the very reason that his activities obliged him to cross the crowded center of the city several times a day.

Around the high wall that encloses the park of the Villa Torlonia uniformed police and Royal Carabineers walked in pairs day and night. In rainy weather they were posted in sentry boxes a short distance from one another. Since the villa is in a quiet residential district it was comparatively easy to prevent unauthorized persons from gaining access to it, for any unusual activity on the part of strangers would immediately attract attention. Nevertheless, a number of detectives were stationed inside the grounds and kept a close watch, especially at night, while a score of militiamen in civilian clothes patrolled the sidewalks outside.

At the Palazzo Venezia an armed detachment of Musketeers of the Duce did sentry duty inside, while sentries from the armed forces stood guard outside. The Musketeers, who wore daggers and fezzes with a death's head insignia, were picked members of the Fascist militia, sworn to defend Mussolini's life with their own, if need be. They always surrounded him at public functions. But they and the sentries were mainly for show. The real guarding of the Palazzo Venezia, as that at the Villa Torlonia, was done by the special corps of plain-clothes men. Those at the office building had the harder job, because the Palazzo Venezia is in the heart of the city, surrounded by busy streets full of pedestrians.

The special police carried out their duties efficiently and unobtrusively. Anyone lingering on the sidewalks at either place was accosted quietly by one or two men, who seemed to be idlers. They asked directly to see the person's identity

papers and, if there was anything suspicious about the man, took him to the police station. If the explanations were satisfactory the man was released immediately with an apology and warned against hanging around the neighborhood.

The OVRA, naturally, was constantly on the lookout for plots against Mussolini's life. When we entered Italy our names were checked against a long list of suspects who were to be arrested on sight. While we never registered at police headquarters when we moved from the hotel that had reported our arrival in Rome, the janitor of our apartment house reported our presence to the neighborhood commissariat.

This safeguarding of the Duce's life was done without fuss, so unobtrusively that it was rarely in evidence. Yet the seeming lack of protection was an illusion, even when he pitched hay or frolicked at some peasant festival. Everybody around him was a trusted Fascist official or a disguised police agent. Sometimes he himself pretended to ignore the police. There is an often-told story of the time Mussolini danced with a girl at a farmer's celebration, in the reclaimed Pontine Marshes near Rome. He was so charmed by his buxom partner in peasant costume that he asked her, after the dance, if there was anything he could do for her. "Yes, Duce," she said, "if your Excellency does not mind, I wish you would tell the Ministry of Interior to transfer me from Rome to Milan, where I will be nearer my home."

All this may answer the question in many minds why Mussolini has never been assassinated, why there has been no attempt on his life since 1926, although many have been frustrated.

XIII

Albanian Grab

Of all the independent little countries of Europe in 1939, the poorest, most backward, and least desirable to anybody but its own natives must have been Albania. It consisted mostly of grim mountains, squalid though picturesque villages, almost primitive ports, and a pathetically modernized capital.

In its mountains lay some minerals and under a narrow valley was a little oil, which the Italians were extracting. The country was mainly agricultural, however, and the peasants, who were most of the million-odd population, were poor.

They subsisted on a handful of goat's milk cheese, and a bit of bread and slept in the bare rooms of mud-brick hovels. Their life was extremely hard. They spaded their tiny plots of land by hand, or pushed crude plows made from the forked trunks of trees and drawn by mud-covered water buffalo. Once a week, on market days, many made the long trek down the mountains from the villages to Tirana, the capital, their donkeys or pack horses carrying precious loads of vegetables or embroidery.

In Tirana they plodded past the modernized front of new, low stone or stucco buildings in raw, new streets to the background of muddy, unpaved, crowded alleys and the market place. After trading their products for a few coins to buy the thick clothing with which they swathed their bodies, they trudged barefoot back to the hills. They had never seen a railroad train because Albania had none.

That was the country and that was the people the Fascist

regime was obliged to conquer and rule to regain the face it had lost in the eyes of the Italian public by its failure to reap any benefits from the Axis wedding to Nazi Germany.

Mussolini could make no claim to the Albanians as an Italian people, comparable to Hitler's claim on the Austrians and Sudeten Germans for the Reich. The peasants were Balkan in their blood, akin to the Moslem East, and dyed their jackets black in mourning for the national hero, Skanderbeg, who died five centuries ago. Mussolini could not claim the country as former Italian territory, for it was a Turkish province until its independence and few ruins could be found to show where the Romans and the Venetians had occasionally passed there.

The only thing Mussolini could state was that Italy had lent to the Albanian government millions of lire every year since 1927 when the two countries agreed upon an "unalterable defensive alliance" in the Treaty of Tirana; that King Zog I, a sort of tribal chieftain who had overpowered his adversaries, had so many enemies he stayed in his villa to escape assassination.

Those were hardly reasons for seizing the country. And if Mussolini trumped up any others in advance they would certainly be refuted before the world by the Albanians. So Mussolini was in the position that he could not, like Hitler, build up his case before he struck. He had to grab first and explain afterward.

The capitals of Europe, consequently, thought only of France as the object of Fascist Italy's predatory pretensions until suddenly, April 4, we heard with amazement that heavy drafts of Italian troops were assembling at the Adriatic ports of Bari and Brindisi for dispatch to Albania, forty-five miles across the Adriatic. Had Zog asked for Italian defense against some foe who was too menacing for his own army of a few thousand men?

The only official fountainhead of all information for the

correspondents, the Ministry of Popular Culture, rarely knew what was going on in its own government and demonstrated the rule in this case. The official to whom I applied for enlightenment said he had heard nothing of any troop movements, but if there were such concentrations they must be going to reinforce the garrisons in the Dodecanese Islands and Libya because of the tension with France.

In the Foreign Ministry, where we had no access for news, but where the diplomats could go, the officials could scarcely plead ignorance. Particularly the foreign minister himself. Lord Perth, therefore, went to see Ciano. The suave young minister admitted the troop movements, and explained they were a precaution because the Italians had heard of unrest in Albania over the rule of Zog. He said the king was ill of malaria, the national affliction of Albania, which doctors of the Rockefeller Foundation were endeavoring to stamp out. Ciano said that in such circumstances Zog's enemies might try to depose him. That was indeed true. Only, in this case, the enemies were the Italians.

We knew what was coming, after hearing that. Yet the propaganda ministry refused to acknowledge even that story until I showed them an item in a Bari newspaper which, I later learned, was an indiscretion. It said the Bari radio station had broadcast a report of "negotiations under way to strengthen the Albanian-Italian pact." Zog had asked for army reinforcements. The broadcast concluded, "It is not in the intentions of the Italian government to interfere with the independence or integrity of Albania."

When I showed that to the press official he could only acquiesce in my relaying the news to London and New York. Afterward I learned that in the instructions to the Italian press that morning, a copy of which had passed through the official's hands, was a warning not to republish the Bari item.

With the cat out of the bag the Italians pressed their preparations for the raid across the Adriatic, still operating in as

much secrecy as they could maintain. The Italian army's chief of staff, General Alberto Pariani, went to Innsbruck to confer with the chief of the German high command, Colonel-General Wilhelm Keitel, presumably to co-ordinate their plans in case anybody cared about Albania to the point of war, but probably as a bluff. Italian naval forces gathered in the Adriatic.

I sent Guptill by airplane to Tirana, while three of us—George C. Jordan, Ed Kennedy, and myself—tried for something of the Italian intentions. Camille Cianfarra, of the New York *Times*, who knew some well-placed Albanians, was a helpful colleague.

Over probably the world's worst radio-telephone connection from Tirana, Guptill reported that Italy was making demands on Zog to let Rome send troops to Albania and establish a protectorate over the country.

"But we don't need them, nobody is threatening us," the Albanians replied. As an Italian cruiser and two destroyers evacuated the Italian residents of Albania, Zog's little, Italian-trained army of fourteen thousand men made half-hearted preparations for resistance.

The night of April 6 a non-Italian friend informed me the invasion of Albania would take place at dawn the next day, Good Friday. He was so trustworthy that I went to the office unusually early. It is such friends who sometimes enable correspondents to score beats, to get the news out ahead of their competitors. We had one when the government announced that the Italian troops, under the protection of cruising warships, had landed at daybreak at four points on the Albanian coast.

Guptill reported the Albanians put up a stiff, but brief resistance. They were soon overwhelmed by the Italian landing parties of thirty thousand men, who brought with them tanks and machine guns and had the protection of air bombers and naval artillery. After crushing the last opposition at Durazzo the Italians marched into the capital. The Italian casualties were only 21 men killed and 97 wounded.

While all this was going on, the more romantic elements of royal romance in the Balkans, court intrigues, and betrayals were not lacking.

Two days before the invasion, while the king was resisting the Italian demands, Queen Geraldine, a Hungarian countess with American blood, gave birth to an heir to the throne.

The 23-year-old countess was married less than a year before, on April 27, to the middle-aged bachelor king with all the festivity the poor little kingdom could muster. Soldiers, officials, and diplomats toasted the couple with French champagne, while fierce tribesmen from the north and barefoot peasants from the south drank from one another's wineskins.

A confidant of the king, Jake Koci, was the matchmaker who arranged the first meeting between Zog and Countess Geraldine Apponyi, whose mother was Gladys Stewart of Virginia. He brought them together at a palace ball on the previous New Year's eve.

They were married in the ballroom annex of the royal palace, amidst potted palms and the king's collection of antique Albanian firearms. Mussolini sent a wedding gift of four gilded bronze vases that once belonged to Napoleon. Count Ciano was the best man. Less than a year later Ciano was flying over Tirana in a bombing plane, watching his Italian army chase Zog, Geraldine, and the baby prince, named Skander for the hero of old, out of their palace in flight. It was Ciano's army because thereafter he was to symbolize the Fascist Italian regime to the Albanians. He was the deputy duce sent to set up the Italian rule and afterward to visit the Albanians on state occasions.

After bouncing fourteen hours over the rough mountain roads in a Red Cross ambulance, Geraldine arrived with her son at Florina, on the Greek side of the frontier. Zog got out with the $160,000 Albanian gold reserve.

Zog's three unmarried sisters, who once visited the United

States, also escaped. The Italian correspondents with the invading army made ribald copy of the soldiers finding their scattered lingerie and romantic French novels in the hastily evacuated boudoirs.

Thus ended the reign of King Zog I and Queen Geraldine. Fifth columnists had a part in their undoing.

Norwegian Nazis had not yet given to the world a new synonym for traitor, but the first Quisling of contemporary Europe was Albania's wealthiest landowner, Shevket Verlaci. This former Albanian deputy in the Turkish parliament, who spoke no Italian, but French, and Zhapher Ipi, Zog's inspector of the court, organized a pro-Italian conspiracy against Zog as a preliminary to the Fascist invasion.

Verlaci may have been impelled by a long-smoldering determination to avenge a royal jilting of his daughter. He had tried it once before by financing an abortive revolt against the Zog regime in 1935. From an Albanian with official connections I have this story:

Before Zog became king he was dashing young President Ahmed Beg Zogu and he courted, so to speak, Naferit, the pretty 18-year-old daughter of Shevket Verlaci Bey. The young lady wore the Mohammedan veil and Zog had only heard of her beauty. Her father arranged for a wedding. But upon Zog's assumption of the Albanian throne in 1928 he had other plans. He drafted a constitution which contained an article prohibiting His Majesty from marrying a commoner.

The world economic depression came and the bey was not hurt by it, but Zog was. It was intimated by the landowner that the royal affairs would go better if his daughter, by an amendment to the constitution or by decree, could be raised to royal rank—together with himself.

Then it was rumored in court circles that Zog was looking to the United States for a wife, and a bigger fortune. That infuriated Verlaci, who visited the town of Fieri, in the south, where most of his property was situated, and tried to start a

revolution on account of his daughter's wounded heart. He hired the gendarmerie to do the job.

It so happened that Verlaci's rebels assassinated General Ghilardi, the pro-Italian inspector of the army and a familiar of Zog. The general had borrowed Zog's car and was mistaken for the king. The assassination was the signal for a tiny local revolt. The rebels were soon driven off when they tried to take the road to Tirana. The policemen involved and others were sentenced to death, but Zog pardoned all except one, who was hanged.

An Albanian diplomat, Gemil Dino, was courting Zog's sister Maxhide. A marriage ultimately was arranged between Naferit and Dino. They took a trip around the world and Dino was successively Albanian minister to London, Rome, and Sofia. At last report Naferit was a bridge-playing matron in Rome.

Although the marriage problem seemed to have been met to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned, Verlaci apparently nursed a long grudge because of Zog's jilting of his daughter.

When Ciano set up the Fascist regime in Albania for Mussolini he appointed Verlaci to be the prime minister.

As the Italians marched into Tirana, the Fascist propaganda mill produced many excuses for the seizure of Albania. Gayda wrote an eight-column thriller on a mad coup de main which he said Zog intended to make on Kossova, across the frontier in Yugoslavia. The Yugoslavs never believed this and they should have known, considering that Belgrade maintained an alert intelligence system.

The newspapers said Italian inhabitants of Tirana had been seriously endangered by the hostile demonstrations of armed Albanian bands. In the Rome office of the American Express, the day of the invasion, I met an American woman who had fled Tirana when the Italian demands became known. She would not tell me her name for fear of reprisals against her

Albanian friends. She said crowds of Albanians had marched in the streets of Tirana, singing patriotic songs, partly in celebration of the birth of the crown prince, partly to show their support of Zog in the crisis. She maintained the demonstrations were orderly.

Another complaint of the Italians was that Zog had squandered on his person and his household the two billion lire that Italy had lent to his government, instead of building public works to improve the condition of his country or, better still, using the money to buy Italian goods. So Italy was punishing a spendthrift.

The principal reason for the occupation, as given by the Italians, was none of those, however. It was the assertion that the Albanian people had asked Italy to drive out the tyrant Zog and take them under its protection. Yet if Zog was unpopular, a neutral visitor to Tirana said at the time, so, too, were the Italians.

The real reasons for the Albanian coup, as an Italian official admitted to me in private, were these:

At home, to restore the prestige lost by the earlier failure to reap benefits from the Axis.

In the international game, to drive a wedge in the "stop Hitler" encirclement of the Axis powers which the British and the French were undertaking.

It was a strategic move against the democracies, as well as against Albania. It gave Italy a military bridgehead into the Balkans. It served as a warning to Yugoslavia on the north and east, to Greece on the south, against joining the British-French nonaggression front which London and Paris were belatedly endeavoring to construct.

In this, the Fascist gesture was a partial failure. Greece went ahead and entered into a defensive agreement with Great Britain, as did also Turkey. Only Yugoslavia was intimidated and shied away from the French and British overtures for an accord, such as that which the two big powers then had with

Poland. Yugoslavia and Italy agreed to "deepen their faithful collaboration."

The grab not only gave Italy absolute control over Albania, with a free hand to develop its resources, but it made the Adriatic, in reality, an Italian lake. The Italians occupied both sides of the sea's entrance and outlet, as well as much of its shoreline. The Yugoslav ports were effectively bottled up.

The British were alarmed for a moment. They were afraid the Italians might immediately begin to exploit their cheap conquest with an attack on Greece, at least with the seizure of the island of Corfu, which lies almost within sight of Albania's southern tip. The Admiralty, therefore, made its customary gesture in the Mediterranean. Units of the British Mediterranean Fleet, warships which were making courtesy calls in Italian and French ports at the time, were ordered to rejoin the main body at sea. Ciano hastened to reassure Lord Perth that Italy had no intention of raiding Greece, and added that now Rome was willing to recall its army from Spain.

Had the British only known it the Italians were in no position to attack Greece. The force sent to Albania was tactically weak and poorly organized. When the Germans moved into a country every German knew exactly where he had to go and what to do. Not so the Italians in Albania. The invasion was improvised. Mussolini's impetuosity had sent the troops on short notice with only what equipment was available. For weeks afterward there was great confusion in the occupation of the country and in the establishment of the Italian administration.

Lord Halifax, the foreign secretary, said in London the British government had warned Italy that it took "a serious view" of the occupation, which might be considered a violation of the Anglo-Italian accord to maintain the status quo in the Mediterranean that had been in effect only a few

months. England carefully refrained, however, from denouncing the agreement.

As a matter of fact, Mussolini hit upon a neat trick to avoid outright violation of the letter of the Anglo-Italian pact, although he had broken it in spirit. He united Albania to Italy, theoretically, only in a personal union through the House of Savoy, proclaiming Vittorio Emanuele III King of Albania, as well as King of Italy and Emperor of Ethiopia. This took care of the technicalities, although it made Albania a sort of subjugated dominion, with a Fascist party, a puppet cabinet and government from Rome, through a lieutenant general who was, actually, a viceroy. Albania was allowed to retain its own flag, a black double-headed eagle on a red background, and that was about all.

As usual, to bring about the desired patriotic effect of the conquest, Mussolini had his followers stage a demonstration of jubilation. The Fascists gathered a crowd under his balcony in Rome. Starace read a resolution of the Fascist Grand Council, greeting with joy the announcement that a hastily summoned Albanian constituent assembly had offered the crown of Zog to Vittorio Emanuele. Mussolini appeared on the balcony and took the customary bows. In acknowledging the cheers he asked that "the world leave us alone in our great and daily labor."

The world was more than willing to leave Italy alone, if Italy would leave the world alone, but the implied quiescence of Italy was belied by the persistence of a familiarly disturbing cry. "Tunisia! On to Paris!" the crowd shouted at the instigation of its Blackshirt cheer leaders.

There was no doubt that the Italian public, as distinguished from the minority of Fascist fanatics, wanted to be left alone, not only by the world, but by its exigent government. It was tired out by the constant dynamics of its existence, the long overdoses of political stimulants. The Spanish war had increased the staggering tax burden, and taken its toll of dead

and crippled. The public was paying to keep 1,200,000 men under arms. It was experiencing test blackouts, riding home through darkened streets in buses illuminated only by ominous blue lamps. All that was calculated to disturb, rather than reassure, the world and the Italian people.

Yet the ordinary Italians with whom I talked did not think of the conquest of Albania as an aggression. Uninformed as they were of the true circumstances of the coup, which had been carefully withheld from them, they accepted the propaganda version. The invasion itself had been too easy.

Although the United States had never recognized the conquest of Ethiopia, thereby offending the Fascist conquerors, the seizure of Albania probably did more to alienate America from Italy because the American reaction fed the growing Fascist animosity toward President Roosevelt. That animosity made its appearance soon after the Germans began to exercise their influence in Rome.

A Nazi-inspired campaign against the president was launched in November, 1938, when the press began daily comments on the "anti-Fascist activities" of the United States, with America represented as the chief foe of Hitler, who was Italy's friend.

La Vita Italiana, a rabid Fascist monthly owned by Farinacci, Left-wing leader of the party in its Grand Council, came out with a violent attack on Roosevelt as a sort of demon of Jewish stock and "the pope of world Jewry and Freemasonry." The propaganda ministry caused the daily press to publish, for the first time, the old, complicated story, invented by the Nazis, that the Roosevelt family was of Jewish origin, having migrated to Holland from Spain and, somewhere in the centuries, assumed the name of Rosenfeld which later took the Dutch form.

At the beginning of February the Washington story appeared that the president had told the Military Affairs Com-

mittee of the United States Senate that America's frontiers lay on the Rhine and in France. Although he denied this later as a "deliberate lie," the fact remains that it upset and angered both the Nazi and Fascist dictators.

All restraints of good taste were abandoned by the Fascist press in a tirade of personal abuse of the president. The papers related the story of his illness, with innuendos, and said, sneeringly, that paralysis had extended from his legs to his brain. It was a smear campaign at its worst.

Mussolini's own *Popolo d'Italia* was the worst offender. It said "world public opinion finds itself faced with a case of alienation which would be nothing out of the ordinary if the White House were simply an asylum and if there were only nurses there instead of Jews and gangsters."

The abuse became so violent that Ambassador William Phillips called the Foreign Ministry's attention to it in a formal note. Informally, the embassy delivered to the ministry, for its information, the genealogy of the Roosevelts, with the suggestion that no Jewish strain appeared in the family tree.

Count Ciano, as usual, disclaimed any government responsibility for what was published in the press. Yet when we asked at the propaganda ministry about the government's attitude toward Roosevelt we were referred to the newspapers. The ministry never included the Roosevelt genealogy among the daily instructions of what the newspapers must publish.

The average Italian was shocked and ashamed. Several apologized to me for the bad taste of the government and its controlled press.

The press was still in full cry after "Roosevelt's gang," which it accused of "active provocation to war," when Cordell Hull condemned the invasion of Albania and Roosevelt followed this up with messages to Hitler and Mussolini, asking them to join in a ten-year nonaggression pledge among more than twenty nations which he listed by name.

Mussolini took five days to ridicule the message as "absurd"

and "Messianic." He said in a speech that Italy was too busy preparing Rome's 1942 Universal Exposition to be thinking of aggression. We knew that as a matter of fact so much of Italy's scanty material was going into construction for war purposes that no headway was being made toward the building of a subway to the exposition grounds, beyond the desultory digging of the tunnel. At the exposition site, with the exception of one incomplete structure, the work consisted of laying out the gardens for buildings that had never passed the blueprint stage.

There was a point in the propaganda which attributed Europe's political and economic woes to America's "interference" and "dense ignorance," as Gayda expressed it. The point was made by Ansaldo in Ciano's *Telegrafo* when he advised France to leave "her ardent democratic friends" and make terms with the Axis powers as she did at Munich.

From the Albanian story I learned of the severe etiquette of the Italian court.

A delegation of Albanians came to Rome to present the crown of their country to the King of Italy. Now, the daytime court dress in Italy for a civilian, whether he appears before the pope or the king, is the curious combination of a black waistcoat with an evening tail coat and white tie. This had been prescribed at the Vatican for the ceremonies incident to the burial of Pius XI and the coronation of Pius XII. I had worn the outfit, complete with silk hat, as had most of the correspondents. But a few French journalists, who seemed more indifferent to the rules than the others, had shown up at the Vatican in ordinary business suits. Far from suffering snubs they had gained in comfort.

It was a warm Sunday morning when the Albanians went before the king and the thought of going through the sunny streets in evening clothes with a black vest, under the gaze of the after-church promenaders, was an unattractive one. I

decided to appear at the Quirinale palace as the French colleagues had at the Vatican. I arrived at the palace in time to see the Albanians approach in carriages of state drawn by prancing horses with coachmen and footmen in livery. It was a diverting sight, for half of the delegation consisted of self-conscious Balkan yokels in the bulky white breeches and bright waistcoats of their peasant costume. The other half consisted of Balkan backwoods politicians, in rusty rented dress suits, headed by the new Albanian premier, Shevket Verlaci.

Before the carriages reached the broad driveway that sweeps into the palace from a wide piazza I applied at the portico for admission. A detective barred the way. I showed him the gold-embossed card that said His Majesty, the King-Emperor, had commanded that I be invited into his presence. I identified myself as a news correspondent. To no avail. The detective explained that only those in court dress could enter the gate that day. Perhaps he thought I had picked up the card in the street. At any rate, I missed the ceremony. It was a small loss. The fortunes of Europe in the next two years were such that I was to see another delegation from a Balkan state no bigger than Albania bow before the king.

Mussolini kept his promise to withdraw his troops from Spain. It appeared that he had promised, not only to the British and the French, but also to Franco that there would be no postwar occupation of the Iberian peninsula by the Italian Blackshirts.

The balance sheet, written in the red of human blood, was made public by Count Ciano. He reported the Italian casualties to be 3,327 dead, 11,227 wounded. He said the Italian participation in the war began soon after July 25, 1936, when, at Franco's request, the Italian government sent nine planes to Spanish Morocco, broke up the Spanish fleet and forced it to abandon its patrol of the Mediterranean waters, and made

possible the transportation of five thousand troops and cargoes of guns to the Spanish mainland.

At a time when Italy was giving explicit pledges of non-intervention to a committee in London, Italian warships were convoying 100,000 men to Spain, 4,370 tanks and other motor vehicles, 750 guns, 40,000 tons of munitions. Italian submarines and planes sank or damaged 224 ships of all nations trading with Spain's Republican government. Italian planes dropped 11,584 tons of bombs in 5,318 raids over Spanish cities and battlefields. Unlike the international volunteers who fought in the Spanish Republic's defense, the Italian "volunteers" who fought against it had been able to take their country's warships, planes, and other weapons with them.

The Italian troops came home a few thousand at a time until June 6, when twenty thousand came back.

Mussolini, in a welcome-home message, disclosed that all the time they had been fighting, not Bolshevism alone, as the propagandists had said, but also the democracies.

"For thirty months," he said, "you have been the nightmare of the plutodemocracies and this should make you proud."

To make the Italian in the street proud the Duce had to show that Italy had gained at least a certain amount of influence over Spain. Ciano went to Spain and collected all that Italy got out of the war, a display of gratitude and Franco's promise to pay, in a long-term funding arrangement, his war debt to Rome. On the foreign minister's return, a semiofficial statement to the press, written in the terse and vigorous style of Mussolini, said Spain was lined up on the side of the totalitarian states and that Franco would come to Rome in September and be accorded triumphal honors.

Franco was never able to make the trip. Hitler had other plans for Europe's September.

XIV

Peacemaker No More

Hitler, in bringing about the Second World War when he did, tricked Mussolini. There can be little doubt that. And Mussolini tricked the Italian people in his headstrong rush into an outright military alliance with Germany.

In complete disregard of Italian sentiment Count Ciano put his signature to the pact at Berlin on May 22, 1939, while Hitler and his general staff watched grimly. Ribbentrop signed for Germany.

It was a ten-year alliance to form "an invincible bloc of 300,000,000 persons to obtain a just peace." This Axis definition of the pact meant that the Germans and the Italians intended to knock down the frontier posts in Europe and remake the continent in the Fascist-Nazi mold.

In the speechmaking that followed the signing Count Ciano made only one noteworthy statement. He said, "The alliance concluded between Italy and Germany is an alliance without mental or other reservations."

In its wording the alliance was unconditional. But there was a very important reservation attached to it. The reservation was a secret one, made by Ciano at Milan in a conference on May 7, before Mussolini would agree to the pact.

Hitler had demanded Danzig from Poland in a radio speech before the Reichstag in April. Danzig was German before the First World War and the Nazi demands included a German route across the corridor through former German territory to the Baltic which had been allotted to Poland in the peace treaty.

Poland immediately showed that it had no intention of giving up the corridor that provided its only trade outlet to the sea. Germany found it intolerable to be cut off by the corridor from its province of East Prussia. The Poles thought it would be intolerable to be cut off from the new port of Gdynia, which they had quickly built on the Baltic after World War I.

Before pressing his demands on Poland, Hitler wanted an alliance with Italy. Hitler thought he could blackmail Europe into giving him Poland, as he had been able to seize Czechoslovakia. But the Germans are thorough in their planning. If war resulted, the Nazis had a plan for it. And they needed Italy for that plan, to distract the French and British in the Mediterranean and North Africa.

But Italy, frightened by Europe's narrow escape from a conflict over Czechoslovakia, wanted no war over Poland. Mussolini was willing to join in an alliance that would serve as a sort of false front to bluff the democracies into letting Hitler have Poland. But he, too, considered the possibility of war. Through Ciano at Milan, he insisted on a period of grace of at least three years, during which no controversial international questions would be raised. Ciano told Ribbentrop that Italy's war potentiality would not reach its maximum for three years. Ribbentrop blandly agreed, stating that Germany would not be fully prepared for war for four or five years. It was understood that neither Germany nor Italy would be bound to fulfill its military obligations until its preparations were complete.

The democracies, of course, were kept unaware of this secret reservation, which would have spoiled the bluff.

Mussolini guardedly reassured the Italians in a speech at Turin, where he told a crowd of fifty thousand Blackshirts on May 14 there was no reason for war in Europe.

"Will there be war or peace?" he asked. "I answer this question by declaring . . . there are not at present in Europe

problems big enough or acute enough to justify a war that, by logical development, would spread from Europe and become a universal event."

While the crowd jeered France and shouted for Tunisia and Savoy, the Duce was telling them that Italy's claims on France were not worth a war. He was telling them, too, that Poland was not worth a war. He was acknowledging that the United States probably would be involved.

Yet, for the sake of the extortion, he sent the chief of staff, General Pariani, to visit the frontier fortifications and announce that "the army is ready." And along came the seemingly all-out alliance with Germany.

It was very confusing and alarming to the democracies.

Since April the British and the French had given up the idea that Hitler and Mussolini could be brought into a brotherhood of peace. They began looking for help against the aggressors and the only European power of suitable size was Soviet Russia. They therefore began negotiations in Moscow for a mutual defense pact.

After the Italian-German alliance the British pressed the negotiations, but balked at the Russian conditions. Vyasheslav Molotoff, who had replaced Litvinoff as foreign minister, said the conditions of Soviet co-operation included a mutual assistance pact protecting not only those countries guaranteed by Great Britain and France, which were Poland, Greece, and Turkey, but all the countries bordering on the U.S.S.R., meaning particularly Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland.

In other words, Russia wanted to be able to use those countries as bases and buffers for its defense against Germany.

While the British and the French were evading the issue of the Baltic states, Hitler saw the chance to keep the Russians out of any alliance with the democracies and use them for his own ends. Germany started negotiations of an ostensible commercial agreement with the Soviet Union, through the German ambassador at Moscow, Count von der Schulenberg.

As the diplomats bickered and negotiated it was obvious in Rome that Europe was getting nowhere along any road but that to war.

August brought the army maneuvers in Italy and this time they were on an extremely realistic problem. The new mechanized Army of the Po, with fifty thousand men and twelve thousand pieces of motorized equipment, made Italy's first test of its ability to attack France swiftly in the western Alps. Ostensibly formed for defense of the Po Valley, the new army tried out offensive tactics in a "counterattack" against a simulated invasion from the French frontier.

Customarily Mussolini witnessed most of the summer maneuvers with the king and was on hand at the last to review the troops. This time he flew to the scene, but stayed only long enough for a brief talk with the king. On his premature return to Rome there was much speculation and, as usual where the press is not allowed to report all the facts, a great deal of gossip.

We heard that Mussolini had suffered a heart attack, complicated by the stomach ulcers which had bothered him for years, and had been removed to Rome from Bologna by airplane. Another story was that an officer had fired at him on the field of sham battle.

All but one of the correspondents knew that the Duce's health was something none of us could write about without being asked to leave Italy, unless we said it was excellent. He was most sensitive on that point, perhaps because his enemies had widely publicized the case of syphilis contracted in his youth, and also because a dictator must always seem in the best physical condition to impress his followers and disappoint those who wish him ill. Any report that reflected on Mussolini's health, therefore, was the first item on the list of forbidden stories for a Rome correspondent.

There was one correspondent, however, who had been in Rome only a month. He was H. R. Ekins, of an American

news agency, who had come to succeed Stewart Brown, when Brown went to the American Red Cross in Washington. Bud Ekins telephoned to London the story of the heart attack. Mussolini personally, as minister of the interior, signed an order that Ekins leave the country. The Duce also let it be published that he was busy at his desk in Rome, had conferred with the Duke of Aosta on the defense of Ethiopia, and had not been ill. When *Life* magazine published an article on Mussolini's health shortly afterward, its distribution in Italy was forbidden. Ciano, who was fond of the picture magazines, continued to receive it privately through the diplomatic pouch from Washington, along with copies of *Time*, which was kept out of Italy because of an article on his wife, Countess Edda.

In August, Ciano went to Salzburg to confer with Ribbentrop and Hitler. The audience with the Fuehrer took place in Hitler's steel and glass Eagle's Nest in the Bavarian Alps at Berchtesgaden. There, on August 12, the three talked for four hours. The next day Ciano canceled a date with Ribbentrop to go duck hunting on Lake Fuschl, near Salzburg, and flew back to Rome.

Instead of duck hunting the young Count went to his favorite midsummer loafing ground, the beach at Ostia, less than a half-hour over a motor speedway from Rome. It was Ciano's practice in summer to spend a long lunch hour from noon to four o'clock on the beach, lying on the unique, black, iron-laden sand under the hot sun, tanning himself in the pleasant company of a half-dozen blondes. Because of this practice the foreign diplomats in Rome rented for the season beach cabins as close to Ciano's as they could obtain.

Stripped to bathing trunks, the ambassadors and ministers could indulge in an informal diplomacy sometimes more effective than the formal variety. It was easy to approach the foreign minister and take up with him in an offhand way some matter that was bothering the chancelleries, or ask some

question pertinent to their jobs as though it really was unimportant. The Soviet chargé d'affaires, Leon Helfand, had the cabin next to Ciano's and saw him, perhaps, most often. Not far away was that of Ambassador Phillips and those of other diplomats—excepting François-Poncet and the new British ambassador, Sir Percy Loraine.

François-Poncet, so far as I know, never went to Ostia and divested himself of his black morning coat and his monocle. It was not in keeping with his brand of elegant, formal diplomacy.

Sir Percy Loraine was a sporting man, but not to the extent of disporting on the beach, even with a foreign minister. His hobby was horse racing. He kept a racing stable in England and talked horses with his colleagues of the diplomatic corps when they called to discuss their problems. He not only was a gentleman, but a judge of good whisky as well as horseflesh. He had a private stock of whisky sent from Scotland. This he kept under lock, even in the decanter, so that his servants would not be tempted to tipple. The decanter was kept in a locked case. Before settling down to talk with a colleague, Sir Percy would send the butler for the box, select a key from among a bunch that he wore at the end of a chain, unlock the case, extract the bottle, pour out two drinks in glasses, return the bottle to the box, relock it, and hand it back to the butler.

For several days after Ciano returned from Salzburg the diplomats found him unapproachable at the beach. His usually carefree countenance was stern and serious, almost as though he was sulking.

Eventually diplomats heard the story of Salzburg.

Hitler had told Ciano that Germany was determined to go to war against Poland. He refused to act through diplomatic channels to obtain the corridor and what he wanted of Polish territory. He refused to consider another Munich, except to discuss the formal details of handing over Danzig and the corridor. He thought the war could be confined to the east.

Ciano, speaking for Mussolini, warned Hitler that the war could not be localized. The Nazi policy was bound to result in international complications. Great Britain would fight in Poland's defense and that meant France would. Count Dino Grandi, the Italian ambassador to London, had done a good job in reporting British opinion to Rome and the Duce believed his reports.

Mussolini, through Ciano, proposed the publication of a joint German-Italian statement of confidence that the Polish dispute could be settled through normal diplomatic channels. This Hitler refused to do. He was not convinced that Great Britain and France would declare war on Germany if Poland was attacked.

"You can't get away with it this time," Ciano said, in effect.

Hitler stormed at him. "You ass, you son of an ass!" the Fuehrer was supposed to have shouted.

Nevertheless, Ciano said, Italy did not intend to become involved in a general war. As Mussolini had said, Danzig and the corridor were not worth a war.

The Fascist newspapers, in reporting the Salzburg meeting, only talked of unity of ideas and purposes between Italy and Germany. But Ciano, in a speech to the new Fascist Chamber on December 16, confirmed the story of what actually took place, excepting the scene with Hitler.

Count Ciano had two offices in the Chigi palace in Rome. One was small and light. That was where he ordinarily received the diplomats on their formal calls. The other, adjoining the first, was the large, rather gloomy room that Mussolini had used before he moved his office to the Palazzo Venezia. In this room was a large safe and in the safe Ciano kept his diaries. There was one for each year and each in a different color. If he ever writes a book, as he may well do after the war, the diaries should afford him plenty of material. Especially if one contains the detailed story of his interviews with Hitler.

After Ciano recovered from the Salzburg trip the Polish

Ambassador, General Boleslaw Wieniawa-Dlugoszowski, a new man in Rome, talked with him at the beach. Loraine, François-Poncet, and Phillips, separately of course, saw him in his office. To them, he manifested no alarm at the trend toward war, indicating clearly that Italy had made no inescapable commitments at Salzburg.

Mussolini, meanwhile, did not abandon his attempt to be a mediator, a peacemaker, a role in which he fancied himself, always provided, of course, he could make a peace in which his codictator would get what he wanted. He proposed, as it later was made known, an international conference to be preceded by the cession of Danzig to Germany, as an earnest of good will.

Through the Italian press the Duce recommended that Poland negotiate directly with Berlin, or be annihilated by war on its own soil. This shows that Mussolini knew how far Hitler would go to gain his ends.

"Poland has only a few days—not many—to reflect," Gayda wrote in *La Voce d'Italia* (The Voice of Italy), Sunday edition of his newspaper. The only last-hour solution was for Poland to negotiate with Germany on the basis of the speech Hitler made in the Reichstag in April. Otherwise, Poland's complete independence would be threatened.

The next day the world was shocked by a diplomatic bombshell, the announcement from Berlin that Ribbentrop would arrive in Moscow on Wednesday, August 23, "to conclude negotiations" for a nonaggression treaty on which the German and Soviet governments had decided. The surprise and bewilderment in Rome were as tremendous as they were elsewhere.

The news was in the papers abroad almost before Mussolini knew of it. Ciano cut short a visit to Albania and flew back to Rome. The Italian ambassador to Berlin, Bernardo Attolico, had been tipped off and had rushed to Rome, where he conferred with Ciano and the two of them consulted with the Duce.

"At Salzburg," Ciano later said, "I was informed that the commercial negotiations with Moscow were proceeding favorably enough to warrant hopes of further developments. At ten o'clock in the evening of August 21, Ribbentrop telephoned to me that he was going to Moscow on the 23rd to sign a pact of nonaggression between the Reich and the U.S.S.R."

The German-Soviet agreement was signed. Stalin, hopeless of a mutual defense treaty with the democracies, made a nonaggression pact with Hitler to save Russia, if possible, from attack. Article I stated, "The two contracting parties obligate themselves to refrain from every act of force, every aggressive action and every attack against each other, including any single action or that taken in conjunction with other powers."

It was a bitter pill for the Italians to swallow. Since the man in the street had been told that Italians fought to free Spain from the Bolshevik influence, could he keep from wondering whether the Axis foreign policy, in which Italy was supposed to share, had any sincerity in it?

There is great doubt as to how far Mussolini was informed of the German-Soviet negotiations. Count von der Schulenberg kept the Italian ambassador in Moscow, Augusto Rosso, informed to a certain extent and Rosso reported to Rome. Toward the end of April the Italians had agreed with the Germans to go easy on Russia in the hope of neutralizing the Soviet Union and keeping it out of the allied bloc. This was apparent at the time the Italian-German military alliance was signed. Until then the rapprochement between Germany and Italy was camouflaged by the alleged need for a joint struggle against Communism, for which Italy, Germany, and Japan were allied in the Anti-Comintern pact. There was no mention of Communism in the new Italian-German treaty.

The Fascist press, in fact, began to say there was little difference between Joseph Stalin's Russia, Adolf Hitler's Ger-

many, Benito Mussolini's Italy, and Francisco Franco's Spain. All had as their enemies capitalism and the bourgeoisie. Russia's natural allies were not the democracies, but the totalitarians.

This reasoning was soon dropped in the press, however, because the government itself had no enthusiasm for the Berlin-Moscow deal. Ciano excused it only on the ground that the democratic courtship of the Soviet Union had restored the Kremlin to respectability after the purging of Lenin's old guard.

"If the great democracies had ignored Russia," Ciano told Italy, "Germany would have had well-founded motives for doing the same."

This did not prevent Mussolini from claiming credit for bringing Russia into the German camp. Gayda, the mouthpiece, said the Duce had recommended Nazi-Bolshevik collaboration with Goering when the German air marshal visited Rome in April.

While Fascist Rome stood on the sidelines, shouting threats and warnings to the democracies and urging Poland to throw itself on the mercy of the Reich, the head of the other Rome, Pope Pius XII, was anxious to act as intermediary between the opposing forces, but could see no way of doing it without jeopardizing his position of moral impartiality and Vatican City's political neutrality. Article 24 of the Lateran treaty specifically provided that "the Holy See, in relation to the sovereignty which belongs to it in the international field, declares it desires to remain and will remain apart from temporal conflicts among other states, as well as from any international congress promoted for such a purpose, unless the parties in conflict make a joint appeal to its mission of peace."

Pius XII would have welcomed an appeal from the parties in conflict, Germany and Poland, that he settle their differences, but he could not volunteer his services. He had appealed to the nations of Europe in May that they keep the peace and

had received assurances of good will, especially from Mussolini and Hitler.

The pope knew how much he could rely on Hitler's promises. From Castel Gandolfo, where he was passing the summer, he made his own position known as the war month brought its war by broadcasting a radio appeal to all in a position of authority in the world to act in such a way that Europe's differences might be peacefully composed.

At the same time Ambassador Phillips was delivering a personal message from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Vittorio Emanuele. The president went over Mussolini's head to tell the king he hoped he would find some way of exercising his influence and that of his government on behalf of peace.

The message was received at the embassy about seven o'clock in the evening when the diplomatic chancelleries of Rome were closing. As soon as it was decoded Phillips went to Ciano and asked the earliest possible audience with the king, who was hunting and fishing at his lodge in the Alps near the French frontier. A half-hour later Ciano sent word that the audience was fixed for two o'clock the next afternoon. At eleven o'clock that night the ambassador and Walter C. Dowling, third secretary of the embassy, left for Turin. They found Ciano on the same train. He was going along to receive from Vittorio Emanuele the Collar of the Annunciation, which would allow him to call the king cousin, as a reward for his able handling of Italian diplomacy.

After a motor ride up mountain roads, the ambassador came to the royal fishing camp in a valley. The king was waiting before a small house in the remote village of Sant'Anna di Valdieri. The king led the ambassador into a small room, which he explained was the only reception room available.

Phillips conveyed his message. The king asked him to thank Roosevelt cordially for it and promised to refer it to his government. This he was able to do when he received Ciano shortly afterward. He handed the foreign minister the collar

and the president's message at the same time. That was the extent of the royal influence. Mussolini, on reading Roosevelt's message to the king, had the press describe it as a stale repetition of the president's April proposal. The next few days were feverish with diplomatic activity. In Berlin, Attolico had long talks with Hitler and reported back to Ciano, who in Rome received the German ambassador, Mackensen, repeatedly. When the British ambassador to Berlin, Sir Nevile Henderson, arrived in London with a message from Hitler, demanding unconditional return of Danzig to the Reich and recognition of Germany's right to the Polish corridor, Gayda said it was the result of direct discussions between Hitler and Mussolini, a last attempt to save the peace of Europe.

August 25, at 3 P.M., Mackensen took to the Duce a long telephone message from Hitler. At 6 P.M., Mussolini's reply was delivered by Attolico in Berlin. At 9:30 P.M., Mackensen was back at the Palazzo Venezia with a further message from the Fuehrer.

August 26, Mussolini received a third message from Hitler and dispatched an immediate reply.

August 27, another Hitler message to Mussolini was announced.

The purpose of such reporting of the diplomatic visits, which were withheld ordinarily from the Italian press, was obvious. Mussolini was giving the public the impression that Hitler was supplying him with a blow-by-blow account of what was going on in Berlin and consulting the Duce on everything he did.

But since diplomatic activity is a thing unseen and unheard, an uncanny stillness pervaded Rome. Two classes of reservists received the individual cards calling them to the colors. With thirty-five Blackshirt battalions under arms and the navy and air force on a war footing, Italy had a million and a half men mobilized.

Yet there were no marching troops, no placards calling

men to the colors, no noticeable change in the rhythm of life. For six weeks posters on the walls advised Italians, "Buy your gas mask in time." But nobody bought them and the government, not having nearly enough masks for everybody, did not urge the purchase.

With every capital wondering what Italy would do in case Germany went to war, the Italian people were confident that Mussolini would spare them. On the basis of that knowledge, and what Ciano had told the diplomats, I wrote, in a dispatch and for a special radio broadcast, that Italy probably would not fight.

The broadcast arrangements enabled me to try the statement out on the radio censor. Radio scripts, unlike news dispatches at that time, had to be submitted to the censor before they went on the air. That was a requirement of the Ministry of Marine, which controlled the radio communications. The radio censor was a young official of the propaganda ministry of American ancestry, George Nelson Page. He was the great-nephew of the ambassador, Thomas Nelson Page. His grandfather, Albert Nelson Page, I believe, had acquired banking interests in Rome. George Nelson Page was Italian by virtue of his birth in Italy. By his own political sentiments he was one of the most Fascist of the Fascists.

I took the radio script to Page at the Ministry of Popular Culture. In the streets one might have thought that Italy was going to war. The city was darkened in an all-night test blackout. I watched Page carefully while he read through the script. At the point where I said Italy probably would not fight, he remarked, "That's very interesting." I don't know if he had any inside information or was merely one of the Italians who were confident that Mussolini would protect them. At any rate, he returned the script with his approval after only one deletion, a sentence that said the king's name would head the list of Italians opposed to war.

It is deplorable perhaps to say so, but the war came as a

relief. Horrible as war is, the outbreak of it, the moment of the declaration, releases the tension of those whose nerves are drawn taut by the uncertainty of what the next month, the next week, the next day may bring, the constant talk of war, the preparation for it, the need to decide in advance what you will do if it comes. Afterward, of course, you realize that you are worse off than you were. But for the moment you can say, "Here it is at last, now we can relax." That is what is done to you by the war of nerves which precedes the shooting war.

Chamberlain tried to stall off the shooting war as long as he could. He wanted Hitler to negotiate. He finally had Loraine go to Ciano and ask Mussolini to be the go-between, to use his powers of persuasion on Hitler to provide London with an acceptable reply to its offer of a compromise. It was useless. Hitler was determined not to negotiate and Mussolini knew it.

The Duce also knew that Hitler had tricked him, that he had failed to abide by the reservation Ciano and Ribbentrop made in May. He had to make the best of the situation. One thing was to keep the Italian people calm. When the *Popolo di Roma* appeared with "Guerra?" (War?) in box-car letters filling the upper half of its front page, the paper was confiscated. On the other hand, Italians were warned to leave the cities and seek safety in the country. Food restrictions were announced. Hotels and restaurants could serve only one main course, either meat or fish, but not both. First the price of gasoline was increased a third to one dollar a gallon to restrict the use of private cars, without alarming the public by rationing the motor fuel. Within three days, when this proved ineffective, it was announced that special government permits would be necessary for the operation of private cars.

Hitler's deadline came inexorably. On the eve of the impending attack, August 31, Mussolini had Ciano call in the British and French ambassadors. Through them he sent word to London and Paris that he would call a conference of

Poland, Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Soviet Russia for September 5 "to review the Versailles treaty clauses which are the cause of European unrest," if he could be assured of agreement from the British, the French, and the Poles. The conference was to plan the rearrangement of the continent on geographic and ethnic lines, in Germany's favor, of course, and with concessions for Italy. The ambassadors telegraphed to their governments.

Hitler could not wait. Midnight was the deadline. So he arranged for frontier incidents to occur which, the Fascist government explained to its people, "determined the Fuehrer to begin military operations against Poland." At dawn the German tanks and trucks were rolling. The Nazis seized Danzig, bombed Cracow, Katowice, and Warsaw. Hitler announced sixteen demands on Poland which the Polish government said it never received. The attack had not even coincided with the ultimatum, it had preceded it.

That morning, Loraine and François-Poncet called on Ciano, with the answer to Mussolini's proposal. Their governments agreed, in principle, to the conference, particularly the French who, "despite the military clash which had occurred between Germany and Poland, showed particular interest (the Fascist communiqué said) in the possible development of Il Duce's plan."

From Hitler, Mussolini received a message that Germany could handle the task in Poland alone. Under those circumstances, Germany did not need the ally's help. Thus reassured from both sides Mussolini called a meeting of his cabinet, and at three o'clock in the afternoon the government announced its decision, which was the Duce's decision. The communiqué "declared and announced to the people that Italy will not take any initiative in military operations." Italy then sat back and waited to see what happened. All but Mussolini, who was still the would-be pacifier.

At ten o'clock in the morning of September 2, Mussolini

telephoned to Hitler that it was yet possible to convoke a conference, preceded by an armistice, for pacific settlement of the German-Polish dispute. Hitler did not reject the proposal flatly, but asked whether the British-French note to Berlin, requesting the withdrawal of his army from Poland, was an ultimatum. If so, the negotiations would be useless.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, the Italian Foreign Ministry made contact with London and Paris. The British and the French Foreign Offices confirmed the ultimatum and made the evacuation of the occupied territory in Poland "a fundamental condition of their participation in the international conference." Would Mussolini use his influence on Hitler to call his army back from Poland, halt the fighting, and negotiate? I saw a secretary of the French embassy shortly after François-Poncet had talked with Ciano. It was about seven o'clock in the evening. The secretary stepped out of the ambassador's office to receive me. It was hopeless, he said. Mussolini had forwarded the British-French response to Berlin, but he washed his hands of the whole affair because he knew Hitler would never withdraw his army.

François-Poncet stepped into the room where we were talking, acknowledged my salutation with an absent-minded nod, and called the secretary into his office. I took my leave. Before I had reached the foot of the broad stairs of the Farnese Palace, one of the finest embassy buildings in the world, an usher came running after me. I was conducted back to the secretary, who asked me, on behalf of his ambassador, not to report what I had been told. Since the source of the news requested it, I could only acquiesce until I obtained the information from some other source. It did not matter much, as it turned out. Chamberlain, or perhaps it was Halifax, made the announcement in London.

The next morning the ultimatum expired and we heard Chamberlain, on the radio, announce the state of war.

Eventually the Italians officially announced that Musso-

lini had simply brought the British-French conditions to Hitler's notice "adding that—unless he heard to the contrary from the German government—he did not feel able to push the matter further."

Mussolini failed as a peacemaker, not because the British and French were too reluctant to compromise, as the Fascist propagandists would have it, but because his ally, Hitler, would not yield a point. Europe was the victim of a primary rule of the dictators—never turn back or you are lost.

Mussolini, too, was on a road from which he could not turn back, the road of economic, political, and military collaboration with Germany. The only thing he could hope to gain was the time in which to choose the right moment for the step forward into war.

XV

The Nonbelligerent

Shortly after the war started, Kay gave a party to enliven things a bit, especially for our Italian friends, who loved gaiety and found little of it in their lives. The apartment was transformed, with rented tables, chairs, and potted plants, into a semblance of a Roman trattoria, or popular restaurant. A four-piece orchestra from a genuine trattoria was hired to play Neapolitan airs. There were heaps of spaghetti and flasks of Chianti. The party was a merry one.

One of the guests, to make the scene complete, brought a placard stolen from a restaurant. It was one that every store and office was obliged to display by requirement of the Fascist party. It read, "*Qui non si parla di politica o di alta strategia, qui si lavora.* Here one does not talk politics or high strategy, here one works." Somebody scratched out the last three words and substituted, "*Qui si fa la bomba,*" which means, more or less, that here one made whoopee.

That was the feeling of many Italians, at least of the minor aristocracy and upper middle class, and I believe of the humbler mass; a feeling almost of joy that Italy was out of the war and that Mussolini had given the command to work in silence.

The people had appeared dumbfounded when Great Britain and France went to war in moral, if not in actual, defense of Poland. Then, when nothing happened to Italy, the relief was apparent in every face. The French had been expected by some of the more nervous Italians to attack Italy as an ally of Germany, and almost everybody thought that the French could have knocked out Italy in short order, regardless of the

Fascist braggadocio. Within a few days after the declaration of war the press relaxed into its old ridicule of the democracies with the remark that the French had not fired a rifle shot, implying there was nothing to fear from that quarter. The newspapers expressed admiration and enthusiasm for the efficiency of Germany's invasion of Poland. The attitude of the press was reflected to a considerable extent among the people.

That does not mean the thinking Italians were so optimistic as to feel sure that Italy would not be drawn into the war eventually. The exhibition of German prowess in Poland evoked new enthusiasm, especially among the young Fascists, where there was talk of Italy's eventually joining sides with Germany to crush France. But for the most part a diminishing ardor for the Rome-Berlin Axis was quite evident.

The thoughtful Italians believed it would take a direct menace to Italian interests to get them into the war, perhaps a Russian move into the Balkans.

They were convinced that Mussolini's policy had been skillful and subtle. The graph of public confidence and faith in Mussolini throughout every class, rose again from the slump at the time the alliance was signed. It was the popular conviction that the Duce had resumed full liberty of action, that at least Italy would not fight for Germany.

This popular misconception was infectious. It took root among some of us foreign observers, including the diplomats. Wishful thinking was insidious and widespread.

Italy's position encouraged the wishful thinking, for it was the most equivocal of any nation's. The Italians had a word for it. The word was not neutrality, which was often used abroad, but nonbelligerency.

The Italians felt the war, of course, as many neutral countries did. Two more classes of reservists were called to the colors, raising the army to 1,700,000 men. But hastily erected air-raid shelters, consisting of planks leaned against walls and reinforced with sandbags, were taken down. Two meatless

days a week were decreed. But only the well-to-do in Italy could afford meat anyway. They likewise were the most affected by the other restrictions, the rationing of gasoline, the midnight closing hour for restaurants.

Yet the restrictions, forerunners of ever more stringent sacrifices demanded of the whole people, showed the weakness of Italian economy and the insufficiency of its self-sufficiency campaign.

The prohibition of coffee was not even a war measure, but a question of exchange. Italy lacked coffee because it had no clearing, or barter arrangement with Brazil, the chief source of its supply, and lacked the money to pay for the luxury of a beverage that every city-Italian drank, often many times a day, although the peasants rarely tasted it. Starace, before the war, asked the Fascists to cut down on their coffee drinking to "spite those countries which, instead of exchanging coffee for our goods, would like our gold." After the war started, the government decided the 150,000,000 lire of gold spent annually for coffee could better be invested for planes, cannons, and cruisers. Italians had to give up coffee for guns. With little complaint they bought instead the roasted barley and other coffee substitutes that appeared in the store windows.

But while it revolutionized the habits of a people whose meeting place was in the cafés, the lack of coffee paralyzed a big business. So, too, did the prohibition of private driving and the severe rationing of gasoline that put most cars on blocks in garages.

The gasoline rationing was necessary because the war caught Italy with reserves for only three months. The country's storage tank capacity was a six-months' supply and this had to be saved gradually out of the dribble of oil that Italy could import.

Many Italians converted their cars to operate on compressed gas or charcoal. The charcoal burners showed a tendency to clog up, however, and there was a shortage of even

that fuel, used extensively for cooking in Italy, as there was of the natural methane gas and the metal for the tanks to contain it. Consequently, after a time, the driving of the methane and charcoal burners was restricted.

So far was Italy from self-sufficiency that Mussolini imposed further economy on the nation, especially as regarded foodstuffs and imports. Schedules to ration the country's human and industrial needs for the year were worked out and gradually applied.

Scarcities immediately made themselves felt in rising prices, particularly for food. A special force of vigilantes was recruited from among the Blackshirts to keep watch on food stores. Profiteers were arrested.

A budget badly out of balance from the Ethiopian and Spanish wars, with the added strain of carrying the administration cost in Ethiopia and Albania after their conquests while Italy rearmed as rapidly as possible, required still heavier taxation.

For this unhealthy economic situation, the war provided a remedy. For awhile, Italy took it and enjoyed a golden boom. The prosperity was too good to last.

The government openly declared its intention to profit from the circumstances. The three chief exporting countries of Europe, Great Britain, France, and Germany, were at war and could ship out only a fraction of the goods they formerly sold abroad. Italy therefore planned to gain as much of this foreign trade as possible.

"The hour of Italian exports has come," Gayda said. "Today the greatest producing and commercial countries of Europe are concentrating their efforts on the war industry and must give way in many markets. They must leave the road free to Italy."

Italian ships, from the very outset of the war, picked up much business to and from Central and South American ports from the German, British, and French merchant ship-

ping. This brought in foreign exchange, especially in dollar credits, which was welcome to the Italian treasury.

To sell Italian goods to foreign buyers, Italy needed raw materials. The regime encouraged manufacturers to bid for the export trade so that it would bring raw materials not only for its own uses, but also for Italy's domestic needs. For the Fascists themselves began to admit that complete self-sufficiency was impossible for a country so poor in raw materials as Italy.

The bid for the world markets also made it necessary to cut the costs of production and raise the output. Regulations prohibiting overtime were cancelled. Overtime pay was established at the normal rate plus 10 per cent. The so-called Fascist Saturday was abolished.

The foreign trade policy was effective. New agreements were negotiated which quadrupled the trade with Yugoslavia and increased that with Bulgaria and Rumania. Italy was able to pay with goods for 7,000,000 bushels of wheat from Hungary.

In Uruguay and Brazil, Italy tried but was only partially able to acquire on a barter basis the trade connections formerly enjoyed by England and Germany, while "hot" Mexican oil from the wells of confiscated American and British companies was imported against exports of Italian rayon and manufactures.

The British and the French thought they recognized here a chance to assure Italy's continued nonbelligerency, if not its aid, by throwing some of their trade to the Italians. In the first five months of the war Italy traded machines against raw materials up to the value of $250,000,000 with the democratic Allies. England took about $160,000,000 worth of ships, machines, cars, and motors, France more than $80,000,000 worth.

In exchange Italy received coal, iron, and other metals with which it proceeded to make arms for itself to use eventually

against Great Britain and France. The British and the French suspected this, and perhaps for that very reason they tried to get some of Italy's arms, airplane motors, and such war products, in the trade. They were unsuccessful.

Mussolini was hoodwinking the democracies while he hoped for an opportunity to intervene as peacemaker and at the same time be prepared to jump into the fight if it ran on to what promised to be a favorable conclusion for the Axis. Under the command of his propaganda ministry the papers fell silent, refrained from once mentioning the Axis or the Pact of Steel after the outbreak of the war, and published the British and German communiqués impartially.

The Duce maintained his attitude of the willing mediator until Hitler delivered a speech in the Reichstag in October. Before that, Mussolini told a delegation of Fascist leaders from Bologna, "The Polish situation is liquidated. Europe has not really yet entered upon war. The armies have not yet met. A clash can be averted by realizing it is a vain illusion to maintain or reconstruct that which history and the natural dynamism of peoples has already condemned." In other words, Hitler is satisfied, so let's end the war.

Mussolini sent Ciano to Berlin to hear Hitler's speech and be on the spot to help in any negotiating that might result. For Hitler offered the British and the French a truce and a conference; otherwise, he would fight to the end.

The British and the French governments promptly replied that there would be no negotiations, that the very invasion of Poland showed the lawlessness in international affairs which the Allies were out to stop.

Although Italy's war preparations were not yet finished, Mussolini could be of invaluable aid to Germany. Italian exports to Germany, especially through Trieste and Fiume, increased, while the Germans sent steel to Italy. But Mussolini did not dare trade arms to the democracies.

The British began wooing Italy at the beginning of the war.

Its blockade watch at Gibraltar allowed the crack Italian liners to maintain their lines of communication with the United States and South America.

Rome became more and more the active center of the diplomatic and political war. Italy basked under the blandishments of both sides.

Under Mussolini's direction the Italian government left nothing undone to keep the appearance, not of mere non-belligerency, but of neutrality. Italians who spread rumors either that Italy was selling airplane motors and marine engines to the French and British, or that it was preparing to join with Germany in the fight, were arrested.

Having, with the French, refrained from opening a fighting front against the Axis in Italy at the start of the war, counting instead on a blockade starving out the Germans, the British could hardly be blamed for trying to win the sympathies of Italy sufficiently to keep the country at least out of the war. The inducement offered by London was a trade agreement for "closer collaboration in the economic sphere." The Italians signed it within two months after the war began. In peacetimes, Great Britain exported about $30,000,000 (£7,500,000) of products, mostly coal and other raw materials, to Italy, taking about $24,960,000 (£6,240,000) worth of Italian products, largely fruits and vegetables. The trade agreement was intended to maintain and equalize that business.

The Italians were so eager for this trade that when the British and French governments announced a blockade on German exports, Italy's protest that its commerce might suffer was much milder than the vigorous protest of the Dutch and the Belgians.

The new blockade was a blow to the transshipment trade through Italy, whose ports and safe Mediterranean waters offered an attractive outlet to German goods after the North Sea ports became dangerous. Not only was Italy shipping German goods as its own, but it was importing as its own,

materials which found their way to Germany. Both ways the Italians collected a commission, in dollars.

Nazi exports to neutral countries, particularly those of Latin America, brought Germany dollar credits in payment. With these the Nazi buyers appeared in Milan to make their purchases. Italy could use its commission to buy British coal and American cotton. Officials in the Ministry of Foreign Trade and manufacturers consequently fumed at the restrictions on commerce resulting from the Allied decision to seize goods of German origin on the high seas. They were equally annoyed by the complicated system of certificates and guarantees set up by the British to deal with imports and exports to and from Italy, the most important southern gateway into Germany.

When a ship bound for Italy arrived at Gibraltar it was met by the British patrol boat, a destroyer, boarded by officers of the contraband control station there, and searched. Articles of contraband were seized and turned over to a prize court for disposal. Other articles, suspected of being destined for Germany or, on the outward trip, of German origin, were investigated. Bars of copper sorely needed by the Italian electrical industry were seized. Cotton shipments for Italian textile mills were held up until British consular agents in Rome could obtain what they considered adequate guarantees the cotton would not eventually go to Germany. Shippers complained that cargoes were held for as long as ten days.

Yet the Italians submitted to this treatment with the best grace they could muster because their ships had more trade than they could carry. A shipping man told me, "In three years we will get enough foreign exchange for thirty years." Little of the vexation was allowed to appear in the press. It was in Italy's interest to go softly until Mussolini decided to make an issue of the annoyances for his war ends.

That time came in the winter when the press began talking of the "chains" that locked Italy in the Mediterranean at

Gibraltar and Suez, the two gateways in British hands. In February the Anglo-Italian negotiations for developing trade broke down. The Germans gained ground in Italy.

Britain and France had tried to negotiate contracts for airplane engines, training planes, and munitions in exchange for British shipments of coal and French shipments of iron. The British contracts were drafted and the Italian manufacturers were ready to begin deliveries. Mussolini refused to let the agreements be signed. They would not only interfere with Italy's own armament plans, but Mussolini was reluctant to give the sinews of war to the enemy of his Axis ally.

The Italians told the British they would trade agricultural products, tomatoes, oranges, and potatoes, but the British said they wanted machinery, trucks, airplanes, and munitions.

Before the British purchasing commission returned to London with nothing accomplished, Doctor Karl Clodius, head of the economic section of the German Foreign Ministry, came to Rome with a large delegation of experts. His visit was prompted largely by the Nazi intention of blocking any Italian deal with the British and the French. Within three weeks Clodius placed detailed orders for goods to be shipped to the Reich, offering coal in payment. Germany was already far in arrears in payments for Italian goods, so much so that Italian rice growers would no longer export to Germany.

But coal was the Italian industry's greatest need to keep its arms factories working. The minimum requirements were 12,000,000 tons a year, a million tons a month. Germany had been supplying only 7,000,000 tons, with Great Britain sending the other 5,000,000 tons from Welsh mines.

The British coal and a third of that from Germany reached Italy by sea. The British and the French had let the Italian ships loaded with German coal pass from Hamburg through the North Sea, the Strait of Gibraltar, and the Mediterranean to Genoa. They thought it was going to be put to work for them. When the disillusioned British learned they were not to

receive Italian arms and munitions, that the coal was being used to make arms for Italy and Germany, the Navy was ordered to intercept all the German coal shipments.

Italy protested against this new policy, while the Fascist press launched a bitter attack on London for its "effrontery" in seizing fifteen Italian ships laden with German coal and detaining them at the Downs, contraband control point in the North Sea. Farinacci called it "an act of arrogance and insolence" in his Cremona newspaper, *Il Regime Fascista.*

The protest to the Foreign Office declared the British action was such as to disturb and compromise political and economic relations fixed by the Anglo-Italian agreement of April, 1938. It said the British government was aware that this coal was a vital necessity to the life and work of the Italian people. It complained of the often vexatious control of nonbelligerent maritime traffic, the "burdensome documentation incompatible with commercial secrecy," the long delays of ships at the control ports—often for days or weeks—the seizure of the mails on the high seas and the examination of their contents.

The coal war was finally ended by the British releasing the seized ships, with their cargoes, on the Italian government's agreement to stop bringing German coal by sea. This immediately resulted in the first rationing of coal in Italy.

While the British showed the greatest consideration to Italy in this matter of the coal supply, the blockade served as Mussolini's leading excuse for the eventual building up of a war case against Great Britain. It aroused indignation, fed by the press. Italy was included among the world's neutral nations for the occasion, although two months earlier all the inspired commentators had said Italy had nothing in common with the neutrals; and the propaganda ministry had solemnly warned us against using the word neutral with reference to Italy in our dispatches, because Italy was not neutral at all, it was nonbelligerent.

The issue was all the more acute because Italy was suffering a real coal famine. Its fuel reserves had vanished during an abnormal cold spell in northern Europe and the wartime dislocation of traffic. Two-thirds of the German and Belgian coal had reached Italy through the Rhine and Danube canals into Austria and then by rail across the Alps. The canals were frozen. Poland had been Italy's third largest source of supply, through shipments by sea from Danzig. Now Poland was in economic chaos after the German conquest and the representative of the Polish coal interests in Rome was in prison, as a result of German pressure on the Italian authorities.

Germany agreed to supply all Italy's coal needs by land, but it took some time for the cars to be found and the railroad schedules worked out. The movement of a million tons of coal a month is a big problem, requiring in Italy's case the passage of a train every half-hour through the Alpine passes. Italian homes and offices, which Americans always found to be at igloo temperature in winter by comparison with the overheating of American houses, now became chillier.

The strain of wartime economy also made itself felt in other ways. The Fascist clothing corporation, or guild, introduced standardized garments for men and women to limit the wool and cotton imports and increase the use of synthetic fibers. It also endeavored to stabilize the rising price of clothing.

The police bore down on food hoarders and profiteers under a decree which made them liable to imprisonment for three years and a fine of 10,000 lire, which was about $526. In five months, 28,150 hoarders and profiteers were convicted. Eight went to prison, the others paid fines, lost their licenses to do business, or found their stores closed for two weeks or more.

Yet Italy, in that period when the Germans had not yet come to grips with the British and the French, was like an island in a grim blacked-out Europe. Visitors from the other countries of the continent said the floodlights bathing with

brilliance the monuments of Rome's ancient glory, the crowded restaurants, the well-stocked markets, the huge building projects in full swing in Rome, seemed anachronisms, relics of the past.

Italians discussed the war endlessly. Kay and I spent our evenings with Italian friends as often as with Americans. The war was the sole subject of conversation. Would the Finns defeat the Russians? Would the British send aid to Finland through the Scandinavian countries and, if so, would Germany attack Sweden? When would Germany and the Allies begin fighting? These and other related questions were debated night after night.

Finland's resistance to the Russians filled columns in the newspapers. Air Marshal Italo Balbo, who was little more than a bearded youth when he helped lead the March on Rome, was opposed to Italy having any part in the Nazi deal with the Soviet Union. He could say nothing personally from Libya, where Mussolini had exiled him as governor because of his popularity after his return from the mass flights to the United States and South America. But he spoke through his newspaper, *Il Corriere Padano*, of Ferrara, whose editor, Nello Quilici, wrote that Italians must have "not a gram of esteem, not an ounce of sympathy for the Bolsheviks."

"For us," he wrote, "they are and always will be tragic clowns, professional frauds, models of coarse bestiality, and living monsters."

In opposition to Balbo was another of the few really outstanding celebrities produced by Fascism, Count Dino Grandi, who had been foreign minister, then ambassador to London and now was minister of justice. His Bologna newspaper, *Il Resto del Carlino*, said Communism must not be confused with Russia.

"Russia's internal regime should have no interest for us, just as our regime should not interest Moscow," the Bologna paper said.

The Italian government's attitude toward the war between

Soviet Russia and Finland was as equivocal as its general non-belligerency. The staffs of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Popular Culture, with Count Ciano, made a brave show of cordiality at the Soviet embassy's reception on the anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution, November 7, although the German embassy staff, attending in full force, outnumbered the Italians. Ciano and his underlings ate caviar and drank vodka with the Russians, although Gayda that very day wrote in great resentment of the manifesto issued in Moscow by the Communist International that said Italy would spring on the loser in the war and demand a share of the booty.

When Russian troops invaded Finland November 30 and Soviet planes bombed Helsinki, no official view was expressed, but the average Italian was outspoken in sympathy for Finland. The government let hostile crowds of students and Fascists in uniform demonstrate in front of the Soviet embassy with shouts of "Down with Russia," until the new Russian ambassador, Nikolai Gorelkin, was called back to Moscow before he had time to present his credentials to the king. The Italian ambassador to Moscow, Augusto Rosso, returned to Rome.

As the Finns fought the Russians to a standstill hundreds of young Italians volunteered at the Finnish legation for service in Finland. Their government prevented them from going by withholding passports from them. It preferred the controlled intervention of the type adopted in the Spanish war. Italian planes and fliers to pilot them were dispatched from the air force to aid the Finns. One of them was a friend of mine. When he came back he said there were not many of them, they had served as fighters against the Red bombers, and while it had been an agreeable adventure Finland was too cold and he was glad to be back in Italy.

Thus, while Germany indicated full comprehension of the Russian demands on Finland, Mussolini made Italy's position clear without an official commitment. He acted in Finland's

behalf with only a token assistance, but it was in direct contrast to, if not in conflict with, the German attitude.

There was little direct press comment on the Russian-Finnish war, but the newspapers were sarcastic about the French and British reluctance to do anything in support of their principles of the defense of the small nations' right to life. In this they betrayed an unspoken wish that France and Great Britain would add to their heavy burdens of arming for the eventual battles with the Germans by taking on the Soviet Union as well.

That wish was not shared by the Italian army, in which many officers were sympathetic toward the British and the French, despite the Italo-German alliance. A general of my acquaintance told me quite frankly one evening of the fear that Great Britain would send aid to Finland through Norway and Sweden which he said, with informed reason, would cause the Germans to spread the war to all Scandinavia.. As a military man, he said extension of the war in one direction or another was inevitable. The armies could not forever remain idle behind the Maginot and Siegfried lines. He admitted that the Italians would rather see the war spread to the north than into the Balkans. But he hoped the British would not precipitate an unequal fight on a battlefield far off base.

While Italians talked incessantly about the war in private they obeyed Mussolini's injunction to work. New arteries of traffic were opened in Rome, spaces cleared for building projects, and farm colonies on a grand scale constructed from Sicily up to the Brenner, where the Tyrolean Alps were fast becoming a land of deserted farms because the German population was departing.

Despite Hitler's assurance that Germany had no intention ever of pushing the Italian frontier farther south, Mussolini took no chances. He decided to eliminate the possibility of the untrustworthy Fuehrer raising an unexpected cry for the territory Italy had taken away from Austria after the First

World War on the ground that the German-speaking populace wanted to be in the Reich. He arranged with Hitler that those who wished to be German might become so immediately and get it over with. For the purpose, a plebiscite was held.

The province of Alto Adige, named for the upper Adige river, had a population of about 300,000, of whom 266,985 were German in physique, language, and dress. Their nationality had changed from Austrian to Italian when Italy acquired their valleys under the treaty of St. Germain.

Fascism had tried all methods to eradicate their Teuton heritage and make them Italians in sentiment as well as citizenship. From 1923 to 1936, there was an intense campaign of Italianization. All officials were Italian, the only language allowed in public was Italian, the place names were Italianized, the education was in Italian.

Italian settlers were introduced, local industries built up, large sums spent in developing the mining and manufacturing possibilities, water power, roads, and the tourist business. Bolzano, Merano, and the villages were made attractive to Italian tourists.

Finally, the cynical uprooting of the people from the land they had held since the days of their great-grandfathers was decided on shortly after Hitler's visit to Rome. We learned of it only in July, 1939, when the Swiss and Dutch legations were informed by a few hundred of their nationals that the police had ordered them to leave the region for some other parts of Italy. The Fascist officials explained the expulsion as brought about by "the activities of certain elements, belonging to the western nations and resident in the province," which had been discovered by the secret police. The implication was that foreigners were subverting the populace.

The fact of the matter was that when the inhabitants suddenly learned they had just three months in which to choose to remain and become forever Italians or go across the frontier into Germany, they showed an angry resentment.

Actual rebellion was out of the question because the odds were against such a small minority, especially with Gestapo agents in the villages to note their behavior. However, the resentment was outspoken. Some threatened openly to the Italians, "We will leave, but we will come back—in the Fuehrer's army." The government's announcement of foreigners' "activities," therefore, was only a cloak to hide the fact that the majority of the people were at heart Germans and the de-Germanization efforts had failed.

This was borne out when the official figures of the plebiscite were made public in January. Of the 266,985 German-speaking inhabitants, 179,085 elected to go to Germany. The 89,900 who voted to remain were less than one-third of the population.

It was an unpleasant shock to Rome to learn that the overwhelming majority preferred to go to Germany, even though the Reich was engaged in war, rather than remain in Italy, to which their mountains and valleys were annexed after the last war. The twenty-year effort to absorb them into the Italian state had failed so completely that they disregarded the assurance of the government that, if they chose to remain Italian, they would not be compelled to emigrate away from the frontier, but could stay in their beloved valleys. Peaceful peasants, 99.9 per cent of them Catholic, they chose to go into the unknown, into Germany at war, where their religion was persecuted.

The exodus left the Alto Adige province depopulated and put a further strain on the Italian economy. Italy agreed to buy the property and possessions of the emigrants and enter the cost—variously estimated at 4,000,000,000 to 10,000,000,000 lire ($200,000,000 to $500,000,000)—on the trade balance as a credit to Germany. The German government then would reimburse the evacuees with bonds.

I heard the Nazis sent the immigrants to western Poland, but that was impossible to confirm in Rome. The Italian

government had more trouble in finding settlers for the idle farms. It seems that lowland farmers do not make a success of mountain farming. One of the cities, at least—Merano—became a place to which Italians suspected of anti-Fascist feelings were confined.

Mussolini, receiving a Tyrolean delegation in March, told them he was grateful to them for voting to remain. It was one of the few times in his life that Mussolini ever expressed gratitude. Usually, he expected the expression to come from others to the Duce.

Much of Mussolini's success as a dictator has been due to his practice of "changing the guard" of Fascism whenever public discontent became noticeable. It is a subtle maneuver, which may imply the removal of a man because of the unsatisfactory performance of a job, or may mean the transfusion of young blood into the regime, or may signify merely a routine change in administration. Since "the Duce is always right," somebody else had to take the blame if any policy was found to be unpopular. Mussolini was able to shake up his government at intervals in such a manner that the public, if it wished, could consider the change a correction of defects, without the Duce ever admitting their existence. The man in the street was left to figure out the reasons, and if his guess satisfied him that was all one could desire.

Within two months after the outbreak of the war there was a changing of the guard in the cabinet and party hierarchy that amounted to an upheaval.

Starace was transferred from the secretaryship of the party to the post of commander in chief of its militia. He was replaced as secretary-general by a young roughneck, Ettore Muti. Dino Alfieri was removed from the Ministry of Popular Culture to make way for Alessandro Pavolini. General Pariani lost his post as army chief of staff to Marshal Graziani. General Francesco Pricolo took the place of General Giuseppe

Valle as chief of staff of the air force. Mussolini replaced a half-dozen ministers and undersecretaries and himself gave up the portfolio of Italian Africa to General Attilio Teruzzi.

At eleven o'clock the morning of the announcement, Edmondo Rossoni, the minister of agriculture, was in his office negotiating with members of a foreign mission. An usher entered with a letter. Rossoni tore it open. A note in Mussolini's handwriting informed him that the Duce had accepted his resignation and thanked him for his services. A check was enclosed in payment of his salary. The payment varied from one month to the next, depending on Mussolini's estimate of the value of the man's services. Usually it was for 10,000 lire, or about $500.

Each man learned of his replacement in much the same way. For some it was no surprise. Rossoni, a former labor agitator in the United States, for instance, was well experienced in such ups and downs. In 1928, Mussolini had removed him as head of the labor confederations because he had become too powerful. The Duce had brought Rossoni back to office in 1933.

When the public heard of the shake-up on the official one o'clock broadcast it was pleased with the news. Starace and Alfieri were the outstanding pro-German and anti-British elements in the government. The others involved had a purely empire-building and party organization background and nobody thought much about them. Everybody was glad to hear Starace and Alfieri had been removed, whatever other jobs they might get, because the Italians considered those two largely responsible for Italy's collaboration with Germany. It looked as though Mussolini had taken action to please the people and it seemed to confirm the impression that the Duce was holding Italy aloof from further entanglement with the Nazi program.

When we discussed the significance of the change Don Minifie, of the New York *Herald Tribune*, remarked, "In

democracies a new cabinet makes a new policy, here a new policy makes a new cabinet." That must have been the impression Mussolini wanted to create when he removed two of the ministers most closely identified with the German alliance and three generals who had conferred with the German officers in staff talks before the war.

Closer analysis showed the real effect was a strengthening of Count Ciano's position in the government. Both Muti and Pavolini were Ciano men, intimates of the foreign minister. Pavolini was a dark, clean-cut young newspaperman who had flown with Ciano as a combination aviator and war correspondent in Ethiopia. Italian newsmen regarded him as a better potential propagandist than Alfieri, who knew little if anything about newspapers and the other mediums of publicity. They said Ciano, who was Italy's first minister of propaganda, had intervened in his old field of activity and made a good choice.

Muti was an unknown factor. Most Italians were unaware of his existence, even, before his elevation to the highest party position next to that of the Duce. He was a tall, powerful, 37-year-old aviator, with the face of a United States Marine and the mentality as well as the physique of a prize fighter. He was a Fascist before the March on Rome, a veteran of the First World War, the campaigns in Ethiopia, Spain, and Albania. He had won medal after medal for daring in the air. In Spain he took part in four hundred bombings.

A diamond-in-the-rough sort of man, Muti was devoted particularly to Ciano and to Mussolini's sons, Bruno and Vittorio, not politically so much as personally in the worshipping manner of a faithful mastiff. In Ethiopia and Spain he was assigned the task of watching over the safety of the Mussolini boys. In Rome he had served as their bodyguard. He was a fighter, rather than a politician or an executive. It was doubtful if he had any pronounced views on foreign affairs, except that whatever Mussolini and Ciano did was all for the best.

Within a week after the shake-up Mussolini found a job for Alfieri. He appointed him to be ambassador to the Holy See. The chief distinction of Alfieri had been that he was considered the handsomest of the cabinet ministers, although he had to plaster his thin black hair in spirals to hide a bald spot. Apparently he was chosen for office because he was well-born, amiable, and Mussolini liked him. Unlike the Italian career diplomats he spoke no language other than Italian.

Mussolini not only misled his own people with Italy's nonbelligerence, but he deceived the pope.

Pius XII, receiving Alfieri's credentials in the customary formal audience, praised the Italian government for staying out of the war. Italy, the Holy Father said, was thus in a "more favorable situation to co-operate better for the advent of a true peace, founded on the noble principle of justice and humanity."

So appreciative was the pope of Italy's peaceful behavior that he granted an imposing state audience to Vittorio Emanuele and Queen Elena in December.

All the pomp and circumstance of the papal court, the lavish ceremonial and color of the Church, were displayed for the king and queen. A procession of fifteen automobiles sped across an ancient Roman bridge to the medieval, circular Castel Sant'Angelo, on the Tiber, where the state reception started. Lines of Italian and papal troops bordered the long, wide street which leads to St. Peter's.

Arriving at the Vatican the king first inspected the papal army of some three hundred men, after which the rulers were escorted by Swiss Guards, in the blue and white segmented uniforms that Michelangelo designed, to the throne room where Pius XII awaited. The king wore the uniform of field marshal of the Italian Empire. The queen was dressed in white lace. The pope wore a scarlet, ermine-trimmed short cape with a hood over a white tunic.

As the royal pair approached, the pope stepped from the throne to extend his greetings. He motioned the king to a place on his right and slightly lower, according to protocol. The queen sat on the left of the throne.

Addressing the king, the pope said:

"May the almighty hand of God guide the fate of the Italian people, so near and dear to us, and the decisions of their rulers, so that they may serve, in farseeing watchfulness and conciliatory wisdom, not only the cause of peace at home and abroad, but also toward the re-establishment of an honorable and lasting peace between the peoples."

The pope's meaning was clear. He wanted Italy to remain out of the war.

Within a week, the pope visited the king and queen in the royal palace, the first call by a pope on an Italian king since the unification of Italy in 1870, the first entry of a pontiff into the Quirinale Palace since the popes lived there when they ruled Rome. After Pius IX fled the palace in a gilded and jeweled coach of state in 1870 as troops of the "Savoyan usurper," Vittorio Emanuele II, entered Rome, the popes remained in the Vatican in protest against the loss of their temporal domains. After the Lateran peace, Pius XI ended the voluntary imprisonment and was visited by the king and queen, but he sent his secretary of state to return the call.

The visit of Pius XII, therefore, was an event of tremendous significance.

Traffic in the center of Rome was disrupted, with the streets closed to the public for the pope to pass. On flagpoles along the way were streamers in the colors of Italy, red, white, and green; those of Rome, purple and gold; those of the Fascist Party, black with the golden fasces, and the white and gold of Vatican City.

Under leaden skies, in a thin, biting rain, nearly half a million people lined the way, waving umbrellas, handkerchiefs, and hats as the pope rode slowly past in an open automobile.

At the open and usually unnoticed frontier between Rome and Vatican City, just outside the embracing arms of the colonnade of St. Peter's, a dais was erected, where standard-bearers of Rome, dressed in medieval scarlet and gold uniforms, took their stand before a reproduction of the mythical wolf that suckled Romulus. Here the Governor of Rome awaited the Bishop of Rome.

A few minutes after ten o'clock a file of eighteen motor cars appeared from behind St. Peter's and moved across the great square, empty except for two lines of papal Palatine Guards and Swiss Guards. These knelt as the cars passed.

The pope sat in the sixth car, open despite the rain. He wore a large red hat and red cloak over his ermine-trimmed cape and white tunic. Opposite him sat the papal chamberlain, Monsignor Mella di Sant'Elia.

At the frontier the pope was greeted by an aide de camp of the king. A few yards farther on, the procession stopped before a dais where Prince Giacomo Borghese, the Governor of Rome, welcomed the pope while church bells rang out, guns thundered a salute on Monte Mario, and five hundred homing pigeons, released at the moment, wheeled overhead.

After the brief greeting the pope's car moved slowly forward, escorted by motorcycle police, the pope turning alternately right and left with uplifted hand to bless the crowds shouting, waving hands, and struggling for a better view. The procession crossed the Tiber, passed along the Corso Vittorio Emanuele, lined with Renaissance palaces built by past popes, past the Palazzo Venezia where a battery of mechanized artillery was drawn up in the pontiff's honor, and so to the Quirinale.

King Vittorio Emanuele, surrounded by the court, all in full-dress uniforms, awaited the pope at the foot of the grand staircase of the palace. The pope with a gesture restrained the king from kneeling to him to kiss the papal ring of office and repeated this mark of favor later to Elena and Crown Princess Marie Jose at the top of the staircase.

A long procession formed, headed by the pope, with the queen on his right and the king on his left. It moved slowly through room after room of the palace, where a special detachment of the king's household guard, resplendent in plumed helmets, steel breastplates, white doeskin breeches, and hip-length black boots, was on duty as a mark of honor.

After praying a few minutes in the palace chapel, the pope reached the throne room. Three gilded chairs were arranged under a canopy. The pope seated himself in the center, slightly higher chair, the king and queen at his sides. All retired but the royal family, with whom the pope conversed for about an hour. The court then returned and the pope read an address.

"We pray," he said, "that the peace which, safeguarded by the wisdom of its rulers, is making Italy greater, strong and respected before the world, may become a stimulus and incitement to future understandings for peoples who today, almost as brothers turned enemies, are fighting across lands, seas, and skies."

The pope was asking Mussolini, through the king, to stay out of the war. Peace, not war, was making Italy "greater, strong and respected." To make sure the Italians would not miss the intent of the pope's words, the authoritative Vatican City newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano,* said, "Together with His Holiness Pius XII, God's blessing and the hopes of nations enter the Quirinale Palace."

No such cordiality marked the Vatican's relations with Nazi Germany. The Vatican radio broadcast reports from August Cardinal Hlond, Primate of Poland, on German persecution and atrocities against Catholics in the conquered nation.

In March, Ribbentrop came to Rome, ostensibly to confer with Ciano, but really to have an audience with the pope. The Nazis, in war, needed the support of Germany's great Catholic population. Ribbentrop wanted to appease the pope, wanted

to counteract the effects of the Vatican broadcasts of priests killed or imprisoned in Poland, churches closed, Catholics deported. The pope had several things to talk about with Ribbentrop. There was the persecution of the Church and there was the lost revenue to the Vatican itself. It no longer received contributions from the 24,000,000 Catholics in Poland. Germany had more than $15,000,000 of the Vatican's money blocked within the Reich.

Ribbentrop was with the pope an hour, an unusually long audience for the Vatican. There was no doubt that the meeting was extremely cold. *L'Osservatore Romano* afterward published an official note that was extraordinary in its implications. It said the pope had received Ribbentrop "at the request of the German ambassador to the Holy See in the name of his government." In other words, Ribbentrop went to the Vatican by his own invitation and was an unwelcome guest.

Pius XII, in his public utterances, had been much more restrained than his predecessor. But in his first encyclical in October, on the family and the state, he had condemned the invasion of Poland, the tearing up of treaties, the suppression of freedom of conscience by agnostic and atheistic superstates.

"To consider the state as something ultimate to which everything else should be subordinated and directed cannot fail to harm the true and lasting prosperity of nations," the pontiff declared.

Yet, while he condemned the totalitarian superstates, of which Fascist Italy provided the model, the pope made an obvious effort not to implicate Italy. His heart, he said, was "joyous especially at the thought" that he could "rank our dear Italy" among the powers, "with which the Holy See is in friendly relations."

However ineffectual the popes may have been in their criticism of Fascist policies, however much they were forced by propinquity to accept the application of these policies in

the Italy that surrounded them, a strongly religious Italian Catholic whom I often saw told me that many of the people derived comfort from the possession of a spiritual leader who could speak their mind on occasion without incurring danger from the Fascist police.

XVI

The Jackal in Lion's Clothing

History has demonstrated that nonbelligerency, as distinguished from neutrality, gives birth eventually to belligerency. The gestation period may be longer than Italy's nine months. The Italian belligerency was a premature birth.

Mussolini took his country into the war when it was utterly unprepared for the titanic effort of a world conflict. He would never have done so if Hitler had not persuaded him that Great Britain, like France, would capitulate to the German might.

It was fortunate for the British that Italy lacked the resources in money and materials to prepare adequately, for Chamberlain gave Rome all the leeway possible. The leaders of the democracies, wishful thinkers, clung to the hope that Italy would desert the Axis. It was a blind attitude because the Fascists gave no hint of possible Italian intervention on the side of the Allies, but plenty of indication of their belligerent intentions as the Spring of 1940 advanced.

One of the first indications was the War Ministry's decision in March to have 2,500,000 men under arms. To this end, it began calling up classes of reservists to reinforce the army which had been allowed to stand at only 868,000 men during the winter.

In the winter Mussolini had let 300,000 reservists go home on furloughs for two reasons, both economic. The army quartermasters' stores lacked enough overcoats and shoes to outfit the men, whose shoddy, ill-fitting uniforms looked like ragpickers' costumes by comparison with those of the Ameri-

can or British soldier. Secondly, the men were needed at home to earn the price of food and shelter for their families, since the Italian soldier received thirty lire, or about a dollar-fifty, a month, with allowances of six lire a day for wives and two lire for each child. This was an increase in the regular soldier's pay from the miserable pittance of forty centesimi, or two cents, a day to equalize it with that of the Fascist militiamen, who were cut from eight to twelve lire a day to the basic lira.

Constant friction between the regular army and the militia forced the authorities to make the pay adjustment. It was also a step toward amalgamation of the volunteer militia with the regular army. March brought the formal incorporation of 132 battalions of the Blackshirts, some 80,000 men, into the army in ceremonies at garrison towns throughout Italy. Two militia battalions were assigned to each army division to facilitate their absorption.

At the outset of Fascism the militia had been a party street-fighting army. Afterward, in peacetime periods, it was a supplementary force in trouble centers, provided instructors in the premilitary training of the youth, and gave the government so-called political investigators, including members of its secret police. It was the spearhead of Fascism in the overseas undertakings of Ethiopia, Spain, and Albania. Now it was in the Italian army.

The army had always resented this militia. The dislike had been accentuated by the disparity of payment between the two forces and enhanced among the officers by the fact that most of the higher officers of the militia had risen from modest ranks in the army.

The amalgamation of the two forces had little effect on the feeling between them. The army's career officers, men of good family, university education, and a high tradition of personal integrity, continued to resent the parity with Blackshirt commanders of inferior standards.

As an example of the difference I will cite the case of an acquaintance of mine. He was a career captain in the regular army, the son of an officer of distinction, with the requisite family and cultural background for his rank. It happened, however, that he fell into an infatuation for the young wife of an officer in his regiment and a baby was born of this clandestine affair. Since the baby could not be kept clandestine, there was a scandal in the regiment. The offended husband and the captain's wife naturally separated themselves from their respective spouses. The other officers were outraged at what they considered a breach of the regiment's honor and the colonel called for the resignation of the captain. Immediately upon resigning his commission in the army, the captain was commissioned in the militia as a major. The militia apparently had no finicky notions of personal honor. For the war to come, it needed officers and was glad to get one from the army.

Muti had told provincial secretaries of the Fascist party that they should make their people ready to enter the war at any moment. "It is absurd and dangerous to lay too much store in the recent manifestations of unfounded and unjustified international sympathy," he said of the Allied blandishments. Italians must be stirred out of "quietism, the easy life, rumormongering, and pacifism."

As the propaganda organs took up this disquieting keynote, Sumner Welles came to Europe to sound out the capitals of both sides on the prospects of the up-to-then phony war becoming a fighting war, or terminating in a stalemate of peace. The American undersecretary of state, who came as a personal envoy of Roosevelt, first visited Rome, where he handed Mussolini a personal letter from the president, then went to Berlin, London, and Paris. He returned to Rome at a fateful time. His homeward trip could not have been timed better to take back to Washington the word of the tragedy to come.

While Welles was in Rome, before sailing home from

Genoa, Mussolini met with Hitler on the Brenner Pass. In a two-an-a-half-hour conversation in Mussolini's private railroad car, while a driving snowstorm blew through the Alpine pass, Hitler on March 18 told Mussolini of his plans for a Spring offensive. He assured the Duce that France and Britain, too, would be knocked out by his foolproof plans for a blitzkrieg. He asked Mussolini when, under what circumstances, and to what degree, Italy would be ready to fulfill the terms of the military alliance.

So confident was Hitler in the ability of his war machine to override the enemy with lightning speed that Mussolini was willing to admit the prospect. He must have been cautious enough, however, to remind Hitler that the Italian army was not yet strong enough for a long fight. It would continue to hold a French army on the Alpine frontier, with the Italian navy keeping French and British warships on a lookout in the Mediterranean, while Hitler's army slashed through the Low Countries and France. If Germany needed help, Italy would, of course, give it. Italy would enter the war when Hitler could show his partner that the French air force was no longer a menace and the victory was assured in that quarter.

All this eventually leaked out, but not immediately. That would have defeated the program. Berlin broadcast by short wave, for the ears of the anxious enemy, that Germany was not influencing Italy's freedom of action. The Fascist government let the impression get about that Hitler had failed at the conference. After playing up the meeting as of world-shaking importance, the press was ordered to play it down as of no significance. Ansaldo said the meeting "was not motivated by determination of Italy to change its own attitude." Gayda called it "a normal manifestation of the Axis."

That was the first use of the word "Axis" since September 1. Hitler had got the ban lifted on that. The diplomats were not dumb, however. They knew Hitler had got more than

that. Heads of state as busy as Hitler and Mussolini did not rush to frontiers just to talk things over as the press tried to make out. Underlings could do that. It meant that questions of high policy, which only they were competent to settle, had been discussed.

Before Welles left for home the diplomats had heard that Hitler was planning a big offensive against France. He had obtained Mussolini's promise, not necessarily to strike at France, but to support the campaign by forceful diplomacy and troop concentrations on the French frontier which would compel France to assign several army corps there as a precaution.

Welles is a human prototypte of the Sphinx so far as correspondents are concerned. It was impossible to learn from him anything of the information or impressions he had formed on his tour. After the Brenner meeting Mussolini would not receive Welles, but the undersecretary managed to see Ciano at the golf club.

Ciano had been a golf fan for about two years. Lord Perth had suggested the game to him one day when Ciano remarked to the British ambassador that he was putting on weight and did not know what to do about it. Ciano soon became a golf enthusiast, although a mediocre player. He had a new clubhouse built at Rome's only course. Those diplomats who did not already play the game took it up so that they could talk informally with the foreign minister on the course as they did in the summer at the beach.

From all indications Welles got little out of Ciano at the golf club. Welles never told what was said. But he was an able analyst of situations. And he had an open mind, something many diplomats lack. Welles had arrived, I am told, in an optimistic frame of mind. He was pessimistic when he left.

Welles, incidentally, made a strong impression on Mussolini and Ciano as belying the Fascist concept that Americans were all blustering, naïve businessmen without finesse. His

dignity and reserve and fair-mindedness, his personal charm and professional ability, were respected. Ciano had Ansaldo write that Welles was a man "of great intellectual and moral distinction."

Italians had an equally high personal regard for Ambassador Phillips for very much the same reasons. They liked him and they respected him for his personal and professional integrity. Mussolini and Ciano admired the very firmness with which the ambassador always defended American interests.

They respected Phillips while they had their press place responsibility for the war on the United States on the strength of the German White Book in March, with the assertion that "action on the part of American ambassadors incited the plutocracies to war." Secretary of State Hull's denial of the authenticity of the documents cited in the White Book was reported, but was not in the headlines. Instead, these said that "Kennedy induced Chamberlain to guarantee Poland and Bullitt promised intervention."

Before starting his spring offensive Hitler wanted to halt the bitter little war that was going on between the Russians and the Finns. So he sent Ribbentrop to Rome to impress on Italy the urgency of helping arrange a peace between Finland and Russia, before the Allies intervened against Russia. The Fascist papers rewrote the old familiar arguments they had used with Czechoslovakia and Poland, advising the Finns to accept "the just way" and make peace on whatever terms they could get. On March 13, the Finns and the Russians ended the war by signing a peace treaty which gave military and territorial concessions to Russia. It enabled the Soviet Union to protect itself against attack through Leningrad by the occupation of the Karelian Isthmus and the establishment of a naval base at Hanko, at the mouth of the Gulf of Finland. The Italian press ministry received the news "with the greatest satisfaction." This was less than a week before Hitler summoned Mussolini to the Brenner.

While the diplomats were tense with apprehension, so unprepared was the Italian public for the unfolding of Hitler's plans that it was shocked, amazed, and frightened, when the Germans, on April 9, invaded Denmark and attacked Norway. The Italian in the street feared the sudden overnight move might presage, as it did, the extension of the war southward, as well as northward, with Italy's involvement in it.

It was obvious that while Mussolini had learned of Hitler's plans at the Brenner, he was not informed of the date for the invasion of Scandinavia. Von Mackensen visited Mussolini at seven in the morning to tell him it had begun.

At the propaganda ministry I was told, "The war started this morning. The first round was won by Germany over the Allies when she stole a march on them in Scandinavia. You can say that much. Watch the newspapers for our reaction."

The extremist press took courage and shouted that Italy's turn to move would come soon. The quick German decision in the north lent great weight to the argument of the extremists, who insisted this was Italy's chance to seize coveted lands in the Mediterranean.

Farinacci, in his *Regime Fascista,* said, "In September, both because the conflict was then localized and because we had just come out of four years of war, no other attitude but nonbelligerence was possible. But a few months of strenuous preparation sufficed to put our armed forces on a war footing. Now we can talk high and loudly. Tomorrow we shall not be found wanting if history imposes grave decisions."

Farinacci was wrong. Italy was in no way prepared for war. Every kind of armament and equipment was lacking for its forces. Ridiculously inadequate reserves of fuel had been stored for the air force and the navy. Stocks of raw materials for Italy's war industries were rapidly nearing depletion. Above all, the Italian people felt a profound dislike and distrust for the Germans, their traditional foes, and wanted strict

neutrality, rather even than nonbelligerency. The nation was not morally prepared for the stern test of war.

Ansaldo, the sly former Socialist opponent of Fascism, knew the Italian attitude and presented it in a masterpiece of subtlety. He recalled the Edda Saga of Norway and retold the legend of the serpent of Mitgard, that "came from the sea onto the land, vomiting poison which burned both sea and air and overthrew the castle of the sage and prudent Asi." The serpent grew to such length that it surrounded the earth and bit its own tail until finally Odin cast it into the sea.

Ansaldo drew no comparison to the German invasion of Norway in what appeared to be a literary diversion from his usual political writings, but between the lines nobody missed the article's significance.

Mussolini's *Popolo d'Italia* was more orthodox. It reported that Great Britain had bought up half the Norwegian whale oil to keep it out of German hands with the Fascist hope "the oil will, in time, serve for the extreme unction of the democracies."

Ansaldo not only got away with his *feuilleton* on the Norwegian saga, but he was hired to make weekly radio talks to the armed forces to pep them up for the action to come. It was always necessary for us to listen to the news broadcasts because the government often announced its communiqués first by that medium. It now became necessary to tune in on Ansaldo every Sunday. His writing style had been easy enough to read, but his voice, through no fault of his, had a rasping, sarcastic note that even some Italians found exasperating.

Ansaldo declared that all must be ready to fight. "Italians who think their country can remain out of the struggle until the end are mistaken. Italy is waiting for the moment most suitable for her."

This was disturbing talk for the Italian people. The Germans were never more unpopular in Italy. The Nazi propa-

ganda film "Six Months of War" was withdrawn and cut because the Italian audiences applauded at the wrong places. When the German scenes were on the screen there was a tense silence in the audience. When there was a fleeting glimpse of a British statesman or a French soldier the audience clapped. An Italian told me of one instance when, in a neighborhood movie, a fanatical Fascist called loudly in the darkness for the lights to come on so that the applauders could be identified. When the cinema was lighted the audience sat circumspectly, and nobody denounced his neighbor for having participated in the demonstration.

The press, unable to reflect the popular sentiment, followed the official instructions to the letter. It whooped the Germans on from victory to victory in Norway. No German losses were reported. The public, as a consequence, turned to the *Osservatore Romano* because the Vatican paper impartially published the communiqués of both sides under noncommittal headlines.

The *Osservatore Romano's* circulation reached its printing capacity of 190,000 copies daily and could not supply the demand. Before the war the daily circulation was only about 15,000 copies. Now the newsstands sold out the editions as fast as they were delivered. Most of the contents consisted of scholarly essays on religious matters. But there were the communiqués and well-selected dispatches from all the capitals. And while the paper often minced its words in the interest of neutrality, its commentator on foreign affairs, Guido Gonelli, never pulled his punches, so that at one time he was arrested by the Italians and only escaped exile by the intervention of the Vatican authorities, after which he was accorded the safety of Vatican citizenship and took up residence within the papal state.

As Mussolini's war intentions became more pronounced, the British renewed their efforts to keep Italy at least nonbelligerent by holding out the lure of trade advantages. E. W.

Playfair, a British trade expert, came to Rome and attempted to reopen negotiations on the basis that Great Britain would buy Italian cauliflower and potatoes in exchange for coal. Ronald H. Cross, the British Minister of Economic Warfare, in a speech at Sheffield, said, "We have no quarrel with Italy. We have every wish to be friends. But we are a plain-dealing and plain-speaking people and we should like to know where we stand with Italy."

Sir Noel Charles, the counsellor of the British embassy in Rome, who had been raised to ministerial rank, knew where Britain stood. All the Italian raging and threatening was part of a diplomatic offensive in the aid of Hitler, causing the British to divert ships to the Mediterranean. But it also meant that Mussolini was due to go into the war. If Hitler's plans went astray the upset of the Nazi regime would endanger Mussolini's. If Hitler won, Italy had to be in at the kill to get a slice of the meat. Mussolini, as an ally of Hitler, was out on a limb, from which there was only one escape.

Charles knew this. Yet when he and François-Poncet called on Ciano they were always welcomed with cordiality and soft words. One day, over a cocktail in the Union Club, Sir Noel said to me, "You know, Ciano is so pleasant when I see him, and my colleagues tell me the same thing, that it is hard to believe he is leading us up the garden path."

The French, too, were anxious for a settlement with Italy, but more chary of the Italian attitude. After Reynaud became foreign minister, he told the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French Senate that in September France had made known to Italy its desire for a settlement of all outstanding questions between the two countries. The overtures went unanswered. As a matter of fact, when Italy was offered free port facilities at Djibouti, a share in the railroad to Addis Ababa, and concessions on the passage of Italian ships through the Suez Canal, Mussolini responded, "Too little and too late."

These were days of almost intolerable strain in Rome.

Not always did Mussolini make his speeches in public. In April he made one to the leaders of the twenty-two Fascist corporations, or guilds, which they were supposed to keep secret. As usually happened in Italy it leaked out.

"Do not believe that Italy will nor go to war," he told the representatives of Fascist business, industry, and agriculture. "Italy will honor her pacts. Italy's word is sacred." He displayed his irritation at the hindrance to Italian trade caused by the British blockade and the report that British naval circles were indifferent to Italy's possible entry in the war.

"Let the English try to come in front of Fiumicino," Mussolini said, defiantly. Fiumicino is a small port at the mouth of the Tiber, where Italy had oil storage tanks. A London newspaper had said that Rome was within range of the British Navy's guns off Fiumicino.

By this time Mussolini was convinced that Germany was winning the war. He transferred the pro-German Alfieri to Berlin as ambassador and brought the aging Attolico back to Rome as ambassador to the Holy See.

Many Italians, and some diplomats, went around poohpoohing the idea that Italy would enter the war, on the ground that the Italian court, the Vatican, and influential industrialists were opposed to it. It is a curious thing that many intelligent people never accepted what the correspondents were always trying to tell them—when Mussolini cracked the whip the Italian people fell in line.

After the British withdrew, defeated, from Norway, Senator Maurizio Maraviglia, in a government report to the Senate on the Ministry of Interior's budget, described Italy as in a "prebelligerent" stage. He sounded the keynote, "Free the Mediterranean from British control," which was to be trumpeted by the press.

Then the Germans invaded Holland and Belgium and Nazi

planes smashed Rotterdam. Phillips saw Ciano, who gave "satisfactory assurances" that Italy would not immediately abandon the nonbelligerent policy.

Neutral navy and military men in Rome had said for a month—and we reported their belief—that the seizure of Denmark and the Norwegian coast was only a preliminary to the execution of Germany's old Schlieffen plan. Under this plan, which the German War Ministry had retained in its files since the First World War, a smashing attack through Holland and Belgium could be expected once the German flank was secured.

The Union Club in Rome was a place on the Piazza di Spagna where the men of the American and British colonies met with a number of Italian members and several diplomats of the European countries. It had the city's most extensive library of books in the English language, quiet reading rooms, and a bar that served the finest whisky exported by Scotland. There one day Doctor Hubrecht, the Dutch minister, George Labouchere, a secretary of the British embassy, and I were discussing what would follow the Scandinavian invasion.

"Why don't the Netherlands let the British invade them and march through to fight the Germans on the continent?" I asked Hubrecht, a kindly and highly intelligent public servant of Queen Wilhelmina.

"We would fight," the Minister replied. "We want no foreign troops on our soil."

"And furthermore," Labouchere added, "we would not do it because of the reaction it would cause in the United States."

The Dutch were not willing to let the British in to fight off the Germans and the British would not invade Holland because that might cost them the sympathy, and aid, of the Americans. It seemed a shortsighted policy on both sides, even then.

After the invasion of the Lowlands the sensation in Rome

was the pope's attitude. For once Pius XII displayed distinct sympathies. He aligned the moral and spiritual power of the Catholic Church on behalf of Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg. It was not enough to save them but it aroused the Fascist ire.

The pope sent messages to the rulers of the three states that he was profoundly moved and that he prayed God their liberty and independence would be re-established by the successful result of the struggle forced on their people against their will and right. The Italian papers did not mention the messages. Only the *Osservatore Romano* published them, along with Queen Wilhelmina's appeal to Vittorio Emanuele to use his influence in Holland's behalf.

In answer, Fascist bands seized bundles of the *Osservatore Romano* and burned them in the street. They molested readers of the Vatican paper, seized copies of the paper from their hands, and threw some purchasers in the Trevi fountain, where so many tourists have thrown pennies because, it is said, the act would insure one's return to Rome. Queen Wilhelmina, her daughter, and her son-in-law were ridiculed in cartoons in the Fascist newspapers.

The invasion of the Lowlands was the signal for the psychological preparation of the Italians for war.

Mussolini nodded and applauded in the Senate when Admiral Domenico Cavagnari, undersecretary of the navy, declared the British and French disturbance of Italy's shipping must cease. The propaganda ministry compelled the newspapers to publish in full a long report by Luca Pietromarchi, chief of the Foreign Ministry's economic warfare office, that the blockade had tied up $20,000,000 worth of Italian imports of cotton, oil, and other raw materials.

Anti-British and anti-French placards appeared throughout Rome and the Blackshirt rowdies who posted them on the walls molested those who spoke English in their presence. Shortly after midnight May 11, John Whitaker, Labouchere,

and Commander Gustave Rodd, assistant naval attaché of the British embassy, escorted Virginia Cowles, a roving American correspondent, to the Savoia Hotel, where she was stopping, across from the American embassy.

They saw some men sticking up posters, stopped to read them, and, on discovering the anti-British text, tried to pull one off as a souvenir. Seven men promptly attacked them. They took refuge in the hotel.

A man in a Blackshirt uniform, swinging a whip, stalked into the hotel and demanded that the three men be dragged outside. The hotel manager, who had come down in his pajamas, pointed out that they were foreigners, diplomats, and correspondents, and urged that they not be molested further. He was knocked down for his pains. Labouchere telephoned for Sir Noel, who rushed to the scene and tried to induce two motorcycle police to intervene. They rode on. Finally Charles succeeded in bringing a police chief to the hotel. The hoodlums had grown to about fifty. Some pasted posters on the car of Charles, who insisted that these be removed. The police chief had to strip off the posters while the crowd jeered. The next day the Savoia Hotel was forced to affix a large copy of the Fascist emblem beside its door.

For days the poster squads remained active, pasting huge placards to pillars and the walls of conspicuous buildings, placards that said Chamberlain had missed the bus, others that displayed only a map of Corsica with the slogan "Terra Italiana." Many of the posters were surreptitiously torn or defaced by Italians the day after they were posted.

Student demonstrations were another form of propaganda. The students were glad to get a few hours off from their classes to shout against Britain and France. I followed one parade of good-natured boys to the Porta Pia, a big stone gateway near the British embassy. They laughed as they carried a coffin, draped with the British and French flags

under crossed umbrellas, and shouted "Down with democracies! Down with France and England!"

At the Porta Pia, they set a lighted match to the coffin. As it burned, a 20-year-old boy in the uniform of a second lieutenant of the Fascist militia, harangued them. "Nobody can halt us. From your mouths come the sentiments of all Italy. Neither England nor France can halt us."

At that moment the Duce passed in his car, riding home from the office for his lunch. He peered from the window and smiled with the nearest approach to a diabolical leer that I have ever seen.

I was in the ABC night club at midnight when Philip Grantham York, eighth Earl of Hardwicke, a friend of Bruno Mussolini, laid aside unread an anti-British pamphlet handed him by an Italian. The Italian struck Hardwicke in the face. Women screamed. The manager tried to calm the disturbance. Hardwicke, the guest of Francis d'Arcy Osborne, British minister to the Holy See, was taken by the Blackshirt to the police station. It took the intervention of the British embassy to obtain his release the next morning.

The demonstrations took place daily. The paraders carried banners reading, "Mussolini is always right; Chamberlain's umbrella leaks; Djibouti, Nice, Corsica!" One column started for the Yugoslav legation, but broke up when a restaurant proprietor, leaning against his doorpost, chided the boys with the admonition, "Quit clowning and go back to school."

Lionel Green, a New York photographer, came into the office one day and said he had just been attacked by a group of Italians who objected to his photographing them while they removed the nameplate from the Hotel Eden. The hotel was named for the garden of the Bible, not for the man who had been appointed the British war secretary in London a week before. Green thought the picture would have made a good newsphoto.

These incidents have been retold because they have a sig-

nificance in the subsequent story of Italian feeling toward the United States.

As the German motorized columns drove deep into France, the British relaxed the contraband control at Gibraltar and President Roosevelt sent an appeal to Mussolini to stay out of the war. Mussolini answered that Italy had pledged its word to Germany and would remain faithful to that pledge. At the propaganda ministry an official who had served in the Italian embassy at Washington told me the Fascist view that Italy and Germany together could win the war before United States help to Britain would be effective. The United States had only seventy thousand trained men in its army at that time and it would be months, he said, before they could put a division on the continent. So Italy had nothing to fear from America.

Rarely in history has a man thrust his people into a war with such cynical disregard for their aversion to any conflict and this one in particular as did Mussolini. In a few days his propaganda organs tried to excite the public to a degree of war fever and failed miserably. The stimulant was too weak. It was an ineffective play on the national desire for grandeur. Ciano sounded the note in a speech at Milan on the anniversary of his negotiation of the alliance with Germany. He said, "Italy cannot remain absent from the present terrible struggle, which will forge the destinies of the world." Ansaldo amplified this by writing that "if Italy should stay out of the contest, it would signify irreparable decadence, a kind of disqualification. To be Italian would mean to be feeble, cowardly."

The press shamelessly asserted that "the European democracies have hated and despised the Italian people." It could have said, with more truth, that the Nazi leaders of Germany despised the Italian people, as they did all who were not of their Teutonic super-race. A few days before Mussolini declared war an Italian officer with whom I had lunch said bitterly, "This is probably the last time I will see you. Soon I will be off

to fight for the greater glory of Germany—excuse me, I mean Italy."

The officer was revealing no military secret. We all knew war had come to Italy, or rather that Italy was going to war. Sailings of the *Rex* and other liners were postponed. Posters on the walls of Rome called on Italians to "break their chains in the Mediterranean." A magazine announced an Italian plan to march across North Africa to Suez and across the Balkans to the Dardanelles. Schools closed a month early. Ciano, Muti, and Pavolini were ordered to posts in command of aviation squadrons. Mines were laid around Italian shores and the waters declared dangerous to shipping. Blackout regulations were announced. Italian ships were ordered off the high seas. Trainloads of troops, heavy artillery, and munitions rolled toward the French frontier. Fascist government officials agreed to a British offer that Italian shipping might pass freely through the contraband control stations, provided the Italians gave navicert documents guaranteeing that the cargoes were not coming from or going to Germany. As soon as Sir Wilfrid Greene, the British trade expert, had reached London after negotiating the agreement, the Italians canceled it.

The German army had broken into France and was driving on Paris. Mussolini's doubts vanished as Hitler's prediction of a Nazi triumph proved true. Waves of German planes bombed Marseille to reassure Mussolini that the French air force was so damaged it could no longer menace Italy's chief industrial centers in the Po valley. Mussolini thought, "If we are to share in the spoils, we must hurry into the war before France collapses and Britain capitulates." So Mussolini, on June 10, committed the greatest blunder of his career. He declared war on Great Britain and France.

In the morning, when Blackshirts delivered cards to the Italians in Rome summoning them to the public squares that evening, we knew what was coming. I cabled that Mussolini would declare war. Soon Allen Raymond, of the New York

Herald Tribune, came into the office, after seeing the columns of men, women, and children converging on the Piazza Venezia from all parts of town. A picket of infantry was posted in the stairway of the Stefani building, where we had our offices on the same floor with the British Reuters, French Havas, German D.N.B., and Japanese Domei agencies. I was busy keeping a telephone line open to Bern, for we relayed most of our dispatches by the Swiss radio to avoid the delay of the Italian cable censorship. Raymond said nearly 300,000 persons were packed in the Piazza Venezia. Fascist party men had gone from shop to shop, ordering them to close for the occasion.

At six o'clock Mussolini appeared on his balcony and the well-trained crowd cheered itself hoarse. The Duce took less than fifteen minutes to make his announcement in terse sentences. George Jordan took them down from the radio and rushed them to the telephone. From the piazza Charlie Guptill telephoned that he counted forty German officers in the crowd. Mussolini was never more dominating, he said, never more sure of himself, his voice never stronger.

His speech, however, was one of the weakest he ever made.

"Fighters of land, sea, and air," he began, "Blackshirts of the revolution and of the legions, men and women of Italy, of the Empire and of the Kingdom of Albania, listen!

"The hour destined by fate is sounding for us. The hour of irrevocable decision has come. A declaration of war has been handed to the ambassadors of Great Britain and France.

"We take the field against the plutocratic and reactionary democracies who have always blocked the march and frequently plotted against the existence of the Italian people. . . .

"I solemnly declare that Italy does not intend to drag other peoples on her frontiers by sea or land into the conflict. Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, and Egypt, take note of these words of mine."

Mussolini saluted "the Fuehrer, the chief of great allied Germany," and closed with the shout:

"Italian people, rush to arms and show your tenacity, your courage, your valor!"

The crowd surged up the Quirinal Hill to cheer the king, who came to his balcony in the uniform of a field marshal and waved his hand. Then the younger Fascists marched about town in a show of jubilation. Flags flew, bands played the "Giovinezza" and the "Horst Wessel." But under the surface demonstration there was no jubilation in the hearts of Italians. Mussolini had reminded them that he was keeping a pledge to Hitler. When Ciano handed the declaration of war to François-Poncet at four-thirty that afternoon, the French ambassador asked, "Under what pretext is this declaration of war?" "Italy is carrying out its engagement with Germany," Ciano replied.

After saying farewell to our British and French colleagues I went to the press ministry, where Guido Rocco, the chief of the foreign section, told us that we must be more careful than ever in our reporting.

"We, a totalitarian government, are not instituting a censorship like the democratic countries," he said. "We naturally must hold each of you responsible for the news you send abroad and will exercise some supervision of it."

Rocco invoked a long-standing prohibition on the reporting of unauthorized military information. We soon came to learn that almost any bit of news became military information if the press ministry found it offensive to the dignity of Fascism.

For the moment, Rocco said, no one would be accredited specifically to the Italian armies, but a little later there would be opportunities for the newspapermen to go to the fronts. As it turned out, we were able to visit only two fronts, those on the French and the Greek frontiers—long after the fighting had ceased.

When we left the press conference the ancient capital, with its peaceful streets and the monuments of its glorious past, was blacked out like London, Berlin, and Paris. John Whitaker suggested that we go to the outdoor restaurant in the garden

of the Quirinale Hotel for dinner. I had the prescribed black-out hoods over the lamps of my Fiat and the one-inch slit let little light escape, so that I had to drive in low gear along the curb to keep on the course. The hoods proved so dangerous that another type was substituted later to allow a modicum of visibility. At the Quirinale, a few blue lights strung over the garden were so dim that we could not read the menu. I saw an Italian officer I knew to be, like most of his race, a temperate drinker. He was alone and so drunk he could hardly keep to his chair. Like many Italian officers he had an English wife.

That midnight Rome had its first air-raid alarm. A plane droned over the city, the sirens shrieked, antiaircraft artillery barked and encircled Rome with a pyrotechnic display of fiery shells that streaked up like skyrockets and burst into bright planets. No bombs were dropped and the plane flew off. After watching the show a few minutes Kay and I went down to the basement, where the other inhabitants of the building were huddled, the children wailing, the servant girls invoking the protection of the Madonna.

XVII

Of Victory, Caesar, and Spies

A week after Italy entered the war I went across the Piazza di Spagna to Rampoldi's, a bar once popular with American tourists. Rampoldi's served sandwiches in those days before bread rationing. It was lunch time and I had no appetite for other food. The new French government of Marshal Henri Pétain had asked Hitler for peace terms. France had collapsed.

As I entered the bar I saw that the counterman was pouring champagne into a row of glasses. A half-dozen Italians were laughing and talking in great excitement. They raised the glasses and one of them shouted, "To our victory over France!" Then they gulped the champagne.

The Italians thought they had won the shortest war on record, a seven-day war.

"It's great, isn't it?" they jubilated. "France has surrendered. Now the war will be over."

Flags were flown from the public buildings in celebration of the victory. Most Italians thought Mussolini was right, after all. He had picked the right moment for Italy to enter the war. France had fallen and the odds against Britain were too great for England to hold out. Italy had won without having to fight.

The men in the Italian government were not all fools, however. Many of them still had a reasoned respect for British might. While they hoped the war was over, they recognized that the excessive optimism of the ordinary Italians was a dangerous thing. If the British failed to surrender, the disappointment would be all the greater. So the press was instructed

to warn the people that the war might still be long and arduous.

The first week of war for the Romans meant only a few incursions by French planes that dropped, not bombs, but leaflets, trying to convince the Italians they were silly to fight. One of these leaflets was prophetic. It said, "Women of Italy, no one has attacked Italy. Your sons, your husbands, your fiancés have not left to defend the homeland. They suffer and die to defend the pride of one man. Whether victor or vanquished, you will bear hunger, misery, and slavery."

The concentrated antiaircraft fire of Rome failed to bring down any of the planes that usually flew over the city at midnight, or shortly after. The only casualties were one woman killed and five persons injured by defective antiaircraft shells that fell to earth before they exploded. One dud went off in the garden of Edward Reed, counsellor of the American embassy. An Italian wag coined the conundrum, "What are the three most dangerous things in the world? Hitler's promises, British guarantees and Italian antiaircraft fire."

Mussolini, who had defied assassins with seeming unconcern for his safety, was frightened by the possibility of an air bomb dropping on him. His propaganda ministry announced that the government offices had removed from Rome to make the capital an open city. Communiqués from Mussolini's office were datelined, "Headquarters of the High Command," for the Duce had obtained from the king the title of Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. It was all a fiction. The government offices remained in Rome, the headquarters of the high command were in the Palazzo Venezia. Troops were encamped in the Parioli athletic field, camouflaged war planes were parked under huts of straw matting at Rome's civilian airport.

Rome was never bombed. Some said it was because of the Vatican and the 425 churches, the roof of each building marked with a large blue and orange emblem. A Brazilian dip-

lomat told me the pope had said he was remaining in Vatican City instead of taking his customary summer holiday at Castel Gandolfo, so that he might act as a "lightning rod" to ward off bombardments.

Others said Rome, a nonindustrial city, had no military objectives important enough to warrant a British air raid. The British instead sent bombers down from England, over the Channel, blacked-out France, and the Alps to bomb the airplane and motor factories of Turin and Milan. They caused some damage, but it was not great. The planes had to carry so much fuel for the 1,600-mile round trip, dusk-to-dawn flight, that they could carry only a light bomb load.

That was after the French collapse was sealed with the armistice. Before the armistice was signed Italy had to make a show of military effort.

Mussolini's criminal blunder in thrusting Italy into a war for which it was unprepared was evident as soon as the attack on beaten France was begun.

The attack was started, from Mont Blanc to the sea, at dawn, June 21, the day after France asked Mussolini for an Armistice. It was entrusted to General Gastone Gambara, who as Italian commander in Spain had tried out the new Italian type of small infantry divisions equipped for swift, hard striking. Gambara was ambassador to Spain from the end of that country's war until 1940. He had told me in Rome that he hoped he was through with fighting, for he liked the job of ambassador.

There is little doubt that if France had not been down and out when the Italians launched their attack they would have suffered another bitter defeat like that of Guadalajara. As in the Spanish mountains many Italian soldiers were frozen in the French Alps. They were sent into action in summer uniforms. Their mules, essential to transport in the mountains, were all frozen. The troops, to survive, took the blankets from the mules to cover themselves at night.

From Compiègne, where they had signed the armistice with Hitler two days earlier, the French plenipotentiaries flew to Rome in three Nazi planes under an escort of German army officers. The plenipotentiaries were General Charles Huntziger, Former Ambassador Léon Noël, General Parisot, Rear Admiral Maurice Athanase Le Luc, and Air General Jean Bergeret.

In contrast with the German negotiations at Compiègne those of Rome were cloaked with secrecy. With the democratic world's epithets of "buzzard," "jackal," "knifer-in-the-back," burning his ears, Mussolini refrained from making a public spectacle of the French surrender.

Only a handful of minor officials met the plenipotentiaries at the airport. The public was excluded and we, the correspondents, admitted by special dispensation, were kept in a pen two hundred yards away from the field. In a few minutes after the last of the three planes taxied to a stop the French were whisked away in motor cars to the Villa Incisa, a seventeenth-century estate on a beautiful hilltop near the village of Olgiata, about ten miles from Rome, with a sweeping view of the campagna.

Ciano arrived there, from the golf course, for the first meeting in the evening. The other Italian plenipotentiaries were Marshal Badoglio, Mussolini's chief of staff; Admiral Domenico Cavagnari, navy chief of staff; General Francesco Pricolo, air chief of staff, and General Mario Roatta. We were not admitted to the villa.

Hostilities between Italy and France ceased at 1:35 A.M., June 25, six hours after the signing of the armistice. The Italians had boasted they would police large areas of France with an army of occupation. All they gained was the military occupation of a narrow border belt in the Alps, demilitarization of the French colonial outposts in North Africa, and full rights over Djibouti, with its railroad to Addis Ababa. There was no mention of Nice, Savoy, and Corsica.

The strip of French soil the Italians had conquered was about 120 miles long and from one to twenty miles wide. The principal towns in it were Briançon and Menton, one about five miles, the other about one mile from the original frontier. The Fascists officially asserted that their entry into the war had forced the French to lay down their arms against Germany.

Mussolini never abandoned his hope to get all of Italy's pre-war demands on France. His press ridiculed the French swing toward Fascism as only a pretended reform. The spokesmen for the regime, including Gayda, accepted Laval's rise to power with frigid remarks that Italians could accept his protestations of friendship for Italy only after he proved their sincerity.

At the German embassy, meanwhile, Doctor Mollier, its well-informed press chief, confirmed that Hitler was negotiating with the Vichy government for French co-operation in the war against Britain, France's deserted ally. A sort of conditional, or preliminary peace had been offered the French.

"What about the Italian demands?" I asked.

"Oh, we will take care of that," Mollier said. "The French will be let off lightly."

It was obvious that the Nazi's so-called peace with France was to be at the expense of Italy. Germany was getting everything that could be taken from France, its steel, its iron, its coal, its alcohol, its men to work in Germany. Italy never got Savoy, but Germany took Alsace and Lorraine.

In October, Hitler met with Pétain to further the Nazi program in France. To reinforce his assurances to the aged marshal that he could speak for Italy as well as Germany, Hitler met with Mussolini in Florence a week later.

There are some who said that Hitler induced Mussolini to surrender Italy's claims on Corsica, Savoy, and Nice. I do not believe that. For one thing, Mussolini at the meeting confronted Hitler with the Italian invasion of Greece that very

morning, October 28, against Hitler's wishes, as a demonstration of Italian independence. Furthermore, Mussolini never disbanded the Fascist-organized Corsican, Nicean, and Savoyan Irredentist committees. And still furthermore, Mussolini said, regarding France, after the Florence meeting, "In view of their legal character, our revindications must be accepted without compromise or provisional solution, which we at this moment categorically refuse."

Mussolini was probably noncommital on France at the meeting. He knew he could not argue with Hitler. The Duce's subsequent statement about the uncompromising character of Italy's revindications was a forlorn attempt to maintain his position. Mussolini must have known that Italy no longer was independent.

For months German fifth columnists had been pouring down from Germany into Italy. They were stationed in strategic positions throughout the peninsula. A German-American aboard an American ship calling at Genoa was surprised to see there his brother, who had remained in Germany. The brother said he had been sent to Genoa with five hundred other Germans, supplied with pocket money, and told to hang around and report daily to the German authorities.

By methods such as these the Germans could soon make their weight felt if the Italian authorities showed reluctance to obey orders.

This was the start of the German invasion of Italy, the invasion Mussolini thought he had bought off in his pact with Hitler. The Axis was proving to be an empty pact for Mussolini. He thought he had acquired a balance-of-power position for himself, but now it was impossible to play Germany off against the other countries.

Hitler had flattered Mussolini into his camp. The Fuehrer told the Duce their revolutions were the same. The Germans told him that Hitler would win the war and make this "the century of Mussolini," whose Fascism had inspired Nazism,

and whose seizure of Ethiopia had started the chain of conquest. The sound of such things pleased the aging Dictator as much as the music of his own violin.

Hitler gave Mussolini two armored railway cars, mounting sixteen antiaircraft guns, to protect "a life which is precious not only to the Italian people, but also to the German nation" whenever the Duce traveled. He also sent Mussolini a handsome, finely trained chestnut mare, Thiene, from the German cavalry school at Hanover.

Mussolini let us see him ride the horse two days before his fifty-seventh birthday.

For two years I had tried to interview Mussolini, but he no longer granted audiences to foreign correspondents, as he often had in the past. Finally I asked, through the press ministry, for an opportunity at least to see how the Duce, as supreme commander of Italy's armed forces, passed a wartime day. The result was that forty correspondents of a half-dozen countries were invited to the Villa Torlonia. Mussolini was to receive the press for the first time in three years.

We were summoned to assemble in front of the ministry on the Via Veneto at seven-thirty in the morning. Three busses supplied by the government transported us to the magnificent villa. There we were shepherded at the gate by ministers and undersecretaries in crisp white Fascist uniforms who called the roll and checked us off on a list for the benefit of the police guard as we passed through. We were asked not to smoke in the Duce's presence. Mussolini himself never smoked.

A hundred yards back of the big iron gate we found the century-old house, once the home of a noble banker, Prince Torlonia, with its Doric and Corinthian pillars, set under palms and pines and surrounded by gravel walks.

We walked in at eight o'clock just as the Duce was about to take his morning ride. Cavalry troopers were exercising five horses as we approached. The sunshine in the unshaded areas was already hot.

We ranged ourselves along the white fence of a riding ring and Mussolini appeared on horseback with his uniformed riding and fencing master behind him.

The dictator wore a white yachting cap. His great torso was clothed in a sleeveless undershirt, held in at his thick waist by a white belt. From around his neck hung a religious medal that bounced with every step of the horse. Green-gray breeches and black boots completed his costume.

Mussolini rode at a walk past his guests and as each was introduced to him he repeated the name of the man. He smiled at some whom he recognized and gave the impression each time of quick appraisal. Some of the Germans were greeted as old friends with special salutes. They all returned Fascist salutes.

Riding up to the Americans after ignoring the Japanese, Mussolini exclaimed, "These must be the Americans." It was an embarrassing problem to decide how to acknowledge the introduction after all the German saluting. I am afraid the bow I essayed was rather stiff and awkward. Fortunately no vocal salutation was called for.

Mussolini then set off at a canter, raised the pace to a gallop, and, as soon as he had warmed up, started taking the various jumps that had been placed in the center of the ring. These were low brush jumps, fences, and hurdles. Sitting straight and tight, Mussolini cleared the bars nineteen times. At the end of ten minutes of strenuous exercise he galloped up to the Germans and proudly asked: "*Bin Ich krank? Schwach? Bin Ich muede?* Am I sick? Weak? Am I tired?"

He was obviously in high spirits and he appeared to be in excellent health, too healthy to please a great many people.

Riding off, the dictator bade a representative of the Ministry of Popular Culture to look after his guests, to "do the honors of the house." We were taken to a breakfast spread on a long table under a tree where the butler, prepared for exotic tastes, had placed iced tea, orangeade, and Scotch whisky.

The riding master, Camillo Ridolfi, was a wiry, vigorous man of 72, with the rank of consul, or colonel, in the Fascist militia. He said the Duce rode with him every good morning after a breakfast of fruit. Mussolini never ate meat, Ridolfi said, but lived on large quantities of fruits and vegetables.

Mussolini rode better than he played tennis. That we learned when we were brought back to the Villa Torlonia just before four o'clock in the afternoon. As we entered the grounds we caught a glimpse of Mussolini moving toward the tennis court on a bicycle. He was dressed in cream-colored shorts, white socks, white tennis shoes, a white shirt, and a cream-colored linen cap with a long visor.

Seeing his guests coming across the yard he lifted his right hand from the handlebar and gave the Fascist salute. When we reached the tennis court, laid out in a ruined medieval jousting ground where, it was said, knights once broke lances, we found Mussolini playing hard in a doubles match. The former university champion, Lucio Savorgnan, was his partner, against Mario Delardinelli, his tennis trainer, and Eraldo Monzegoio, a professional soccer star.

Mussolini had been playing tennis for only three years and was still much of a novice. He played intently and scowled with annoyance when he netted a ball or drove it out. The tennis players among us said he had a powerful forehand drive, but the Forest Hills experts would not have approved of his backhand or underhand service. He hit out from the elbow, taking the ball, whenever possible, waist-high and close to the body. In general, he played the back court, where his opponents fed him the ball so that he had to come up to the net only now and then.

It was a hot afternoon, but for three-quarters of an hour Mussolini stuck to his game. When the play was over the official score was 7 to 5 in favor of Mussolini and Savorgnan. The Minister of Popular Culture, Pavolini, acted as umpire. Mussolini laughed and winked when the score was announced.

Some of the correspondents said they had counted fewer than twelve games and Mussolini had lost most of them.

The dictator donned the double-breasted, tightly fitting coat of a grayish brown suit, saluted with upraised palm, and walked straight through our group with his famous chin thrust upward and a contented smile. His tennis partner held the Duce's bicycle while he mounted it and pedaled off, his powerful legs with the visible scars of old war wounds pumping slowly. Behind him he left a medium-weight Italian racket with the title, "Duce," marked in gilt letters on the handle.

In the morning cameras had been taken away from us, but veteran Fascist cameramen in uniforms, who had served in Ethiopia, ground newsreels and took still pictures of Mussolini on horseback and playing tennis. The pictures were never released in Italy, although some were smuggled out to the United States.

Mussolini's daily routine, we learned, began with riding or fencing. He was in his office in the Palazzo Venezia at nine and first saw six men who made daily reports. They were Ciano, the undersecretaries of war, navy, air and interior—the four ministries whose portfolios were held by Mussolini—and the chief of the police.

Then the Duce received the minister of popular culture, to whom he gave instructions for the press, and the secretary of the Fascist party. He listened, formed decisions, gave orders, read lengthy reports. After other interviews and receptions he went home at two for lunch, a nap, and a game of tennis. Then he returned to the office and worked until his desk was clear, usually until nine, sometimes until midnight.

At that time Mussolini still handled much of the details of running Italy. An official showed me a folder with a two-inch-thick sheaf of papers, the bureaucratic work of one ministry for a single day. Every sheet bore, in blue pencil, without initials, the word, "Si," or "No." The marks had been made by

the Duce. Sometimes he scrawled "No objection." The official said the papers of the other fourteen ministries passed over Mussolini's desk in the same manner.

Mussolini was a born actor. He would march several miles with troops to demonstrate his physical stamina. He liked to strike poses, to show off his ability to pilot an airplane or drive a new type of motorized artillery gun over the rough roads, or pitch a bundle of wheat, or demolish a wall with a pick. As he grew older he did less of this and he gave up driving a racing car or a motorcycle at breakneck speed.

An astute politician, as well as an actor, Mussolini appreciated that the operatic, colorful Italians were color loving. He gave them a show. He was always on the stage, never relaxing, always keeping others at attention.

Yet Mussolini was always withdrawn, never a warm personality at heart. He was not a handshaker and for that reason he tried to discourage handshaking by introducing the Roman salute, which the Italians adopted only indifferently but which the Nazis took up with automaton precision.

The qualities of the dictator were firmness of will, intelligence, knowledge of men, practical administrative ability, self-confidence. He was certain of the rightness of his own judgment and asserted his own infallibility, "Il Duce ha sempre ragione." This was as essential to a dictator as it was to a pope, if he were to keep the faith of his followers in his guidance.

Mussolini, with a wide range of knowledge, never ceased acquiring new information. He read assiduously, including the foreign newspapers. He was supposed to have contempt for material rewards, money, comforts, position. His regime was shot through with graft, but, so far as anybody knew, Mussolini got none of it. He was stern with his personnel and made examples of some whose corruption became an open scandal by punishing them. Usually the grafting never reached the attention of the Duce.

After the war brought food rationing to Italy a high official of the Ministry of Corporations hoarded in his own home truckloads of foodstuffs seized from profiteering shopkeepers. His wife gave a quart of olive oil to a neighbor with the boasting remark that she had lots of it. This was when a pint of olive oil was a month's ration. The word got out and somebody denounced the official to the police. Because of the man's high rank the denunciation was passed back and forth among various officials, without action, until it fell into the hands of Mussolini's secretary, who laid it before the Duce. He promptly dismissed the offending official from his job and from the Fascist party and had him sent to prison.

Mussolini's megalomania at first was restrained. After Ethiopia he became obsessed with the idea of becoming another Augustus. He reconstructed the Ara Pacis, the altar of peace the first Caesar had dedicated in 9 B.C. to mark the establishment of the Pax Romana in the ancient Roman Empire.

But to be a Caesar, Mussolini had to pay the penalty of loneliness. His brother, Arnaldo, had been his only friend and Arnaldo was dead. He turned to his daughter Edda, the Countess Ciano, and she, with no interest in anything beyond the frivolities of life, failed him. Bruno, his favorite son, was later killed in a performance, associated with the war, that was unnecessary. Before many months had passed from his fifty-seventh birthday Mussolini had no companion, no one to whom he could confide. There were some who said he lived too long.

Instead of Mussolini the war took the life of a man often mentioned as his possible successor, Italo Balbo. When Balbo's plane was shot down in flames over Tobruk in June there was immediate gossip.

Balbo was only forty-four years old, yet he had been a quadrumvir in the March on Rome, boss of his home district in Ferrara, generalissimo of the militia, minister of air, marshal

of aviation, and finally governor of Libya and commander in chief of all its armed forces.

It was long a Rome tradition that Balbo had been at odds with Mussolini for years and that they frequently quarreled. He was popular with his men in the air corps and for a time was popular with the people. His flight with a squadron in mass formation to South America in 1930 made him a hero. His repetition of the flight to Chicago in 1933 made him an even greater one. On Balbo's return from the Chicago flight Mussolini removed him from the Air Ministry and sent him to Tripoli. It was a hero's exile and Balbo, the fearless adventurer, made the best of it. He lived in a brilliant white palace, gave sumptuous receptions to visiting newspapermen on a million-lire entertainment budget, and let the champagne flow as freely as the fountains in his palace palm grove.

The announcement of the crash in which he was killed said he "fell in combat in Libya," that he had piloted his plane into the antiaircraft fire over Tobruk during a British air raid. The propaganda ministry later amended the announcement to say that he "fell in the service of his country."

The true story probably will never be known. The British denied they had sent any planes over Tobruk that day. It was unlikely that Balbo would have taken a plane with nine other men, including as his guests his brother-in-law, his nephew, and the editor of his paper, Nello Quilici, into an air raid. Because Balbo was anti-German and not anti-French, because he was supposed to differ with Mussolini, the gossips said that Mussolini had caused one of his plane's engines to be sabotaged. Nothing we heard supported this story. The generally accepted version was simply that the green crew of an Italian antiaircraft battery nervously opened fire on the plane as soon as it showed up, without waiting to identify it.

Graziani, the desert fighter, was appointed to succeed Balbo in Libya.

A political casualty of the war was Ettore Muti, who kept

his life, but lost his job as secretary-general of the Fascist party within a year after his appointment. He was probably happier as the pilot of a bombing plane, which was the post he reassumed, than as the party chief with its responsibilities.

The secretary of the Fascist party controlled an organization that tried opponents in disciplinary courts, arranged political celebrations, pasted war posters, persecuted offenders of its regulations, arbitrated private disputes, distributed patronage, brought political pressure to bear on the negotiation of collective contracts, enforced price regulations, ran the Red Cross, the antituberculosis society, day nurseries, children's camps, and in general intervened wherever possible in the life of the nation. The party's activities were financed from membership fees, special income levies, and contributions. Persons arrested on suspicion of anti-Fascism were known to buy their way out of confino by making large donations to the party funds.

The first secretary of the party, Michele Bianchi, was dead and his name entered in the Fascist roll of fame. His successor, Farinacci, directed the cudgeling of the anti-Fascist opposition after the Matteotti murder. Violently anticlerical, Farinacci was dismissed before the Lateran negotiations and relegated to a post on the Grand Council. He was allowed to use his newspaper as a pro-German, anti-Semitic organ, that continued to assail the Vatican's *Osservatore Romano* at every opportunity.

Augusto Turati, who followed Farinacci, had a feud with his predecessor, asked to resign for a less strenuous life, was made editor of *La Stampa* at Turin, later was confronted with charges of immorality, forged or authentic, confined to an insane asylum, and eventually interned at Rhodes.

Major Giovanni Giuriati and then Achille Starace followed Turati. Starace had lasted eight years, Muti one.

It was announced that Muti resigned because he wanted to devote all his energies to war. The story among the Fascists was that Muti, a simple-minded believer in Fascism as a noble

revolution, was so incensed when he learned of a party racketeer's graft in Venice that he used direct action to correct the situation. He knocked the offender down with his fist. Muti had also allowed himself the luxury of saying that while the alliance with Germany must be all right politically because Mussolini and Ciano said so, he did not like the Germans.

So Mussolini let Muti go to war. He led the first Italian bombing raid on the British oil refineries at Haifa and a squadron of heavy bombers in a raid on the American-owned oil properties on the Island of Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf. The Italians boasted that the planes flew 2,800 miles nonstop on this raid, in which they broke a water main and an oil pipeline.

Adelchi Serena, a colorless yes man of Mussolini's entourage, was promoted from the Ministry of Agriculture to the party secretaryship. Serena could be counted on to keep his fists in his pockets.

War gradually changed the social habits of Italians and foreigners alike. Dancing was forbidden because it was incompatible with Fascist wartime austerity. The Italian had to sacrifice pleasure for the period of the war, as during Lent. Cafés, restaurants, all places of amusement were obliged to close at eleven-thirty in summer, eleven in winter. The lack of taxis, for want of gasoline, and the blackout made it difficult to get about at night, so that dinner and bridge parties were curtailed. The Italians of the upper middle class, men and women, played bridge and particularly pinochle in the afternoon for high stakes.

Almost overnight we were cut off from most of our Italian friends. All Italians were discouraged from associating with American diplomats and those in official positions were forbidden to see us. One after another we would meet them in the street, ask them why we had not heard from them, and invite them to the apartment for a cocktail, dinner, or perhaps

a Sunday bicycle ride into the country. Each told us he had been officially warned away.

"But why?" I asked one friend.

"Well," he said, "I was called to the Questura. There I was told I must not associate with you because you are a spy. I said, 'Ridiculous! I know Massock is not a spy. He has always been frank and open in his conversation, has avoided political discussions in his social contacts, and seems only interested in obtaining news that he can transmit through the normal channels for publication.' 'He is a spy,' the police insisted. 'If that is true, for whom is he spying?' I asked. They said, 'For America, of course.' "

I told this at the American embassy and we laughed at the silliness of it.

As a matter of fact, having worked in Franco Spain and Soviet Russia, when wartime, or quasi-wartime, conditions prevailed, I knew of the European police tendency to consider diplomats and newspapermen as potential if not actual spies. Even in Paris, in the early nineteen-thirties, the police had checked up on us regularly by questioning the concierge because it happened that we occupied the former apartment of a German diplomat.

So that there would be no equivocation about my position, attitude, and activities in Rome I avoided known anti-Fascists, never met, so far as I know, any member of the underground, never tried to obtain news in a clandestine manner. To make it easier for the police to watch over me I made a point to drive a chocolate-brown sports car with a special, low-slung body and a light khaki top, the only one of its kind in Rome. It was so conspicuous that friends would stick their calling cards under the windshield wiper if they saw it parked somewhere. This resulted in an embarrassing incident after I sold the car. A friend, unaware that the car had changed hands, slyly remarked at a party that he had seen it parked in front of No. 10 Via Capo le Case, a notorious bordello.

Fascist spies were everywhere, watching us, as well as Italians. I soon learned that and was informed that a woman who often visited our apartment and of whom we were fond was an indicateur of the OVRA. Later she was supposed to be an agent of the Gestapo as well, since German was among her half-dozen languages.

I was not the only correspondent who was watched, of course. When John Whitaker was expelled the propaganda ministry gave as the reason not only his "unfriendly tone toward the Axis," but also his "access to too many highly placed Italians."

Really secret were the indicateurs of the OVRA. Its members included lawyers, doctors, engineers, businessmen, office workers, waiters, professional stool pigeons. Many of the operatives were women. Some were propagandists. Some were agents provocateurs. For example, an Italian journalist I knew only casually came to my office and told me an intriguing story. He had a friend at the airport who said a man and a woman had arrived by plane there from Madrid. They were turned over to Gestapo agents, who put them on a plane immediately for Berlin. The man had been arrested at the Madrid airport by German agents to whom the woman, a spy, pointed him out as the assassin who planted the bomb that nearly killed Hitler in the Munich beer cellar in November, 1939. This was after the Germans had arrested one Georg Elsen, a German, while he was trying to cross the Swiss border near Konstanz, and charged him with the crime. I knew the Gestapo was operating abroad, but if I had attempted to send my informant's story I would have been bounced out of Italy. I was suspicious of it because, first, I scarcely knew the man who told it; second, he asked no money for it. Italian newspapermen usually sold their information.

Nobody knew how many secret police operatives were active in Italy—listening for hostile talk, looking for underground movements, watching for illicit pamphlets—excepting

possibly Doctor Arturo Bocchini, general director of police. Incidentally, the only time Bocchini's name was mentioned in the press while I was in Rome was when he died. His assistant, Doctor Carmine Senise, as little known as Bocchini, was promoted to succeed him.

Little that was going on in Italy escaped Bocchini, who reported directly to Mussolini, although his immediate superior in the Ministry of Interior was Guido Buffarini-Guidi, undersecretary to the Duce, who was minister.

We saw Buffarini-Guidi, a porcine man always in the Fascist uniform, every noon at the Fagiano restaurant, across the Piazza Chigi from the Foreign Ministry, where a table was reserved for him. Fagiano's was the lunchtime gathering place of John Whitaker, Allen Raymond, Peter Tompkins, Percy Winner of the International News Service, and myself.

Some said the secret police numbered fifty thousand. They cost the government forty to sixty million lire a year, appropriated periodically for "political investigation." They were distinct from the fifteen thousand regular plainclothesmen, attached to the various local police stations throughout Italy.

The secret police reported on any defections in the workers' syndicates, professional corporations, or guilds, the Slovene population in the Yugoslav frontier area, the government offices, party organizations, the activities of foreigners, of everybody. Usually they denounced suspects to the local police, who made the arrests.

A fiduciario, or confidant, was attached to every office, including ours. I knew this because I learned of a lengthy report from within our office in which I was characterized as a Freemason. It so happened that my only affiliations were a couple of college fraternities and the Union Club. Our fiduciario was a poor informer. I never succeeded in identifying him among the Italian personnel.

The knowledge of the secret spying that went on around one was a deterrent in itself because of the consciousness that

one was watched in all his doings. In speaking of Mussolini in public we used the name "Mr. Smith," or "The Duke," to avoid having a stranger breathe down our necks in order to catch our conversation.

Italians who discussed politics in their homes turned on the radio, or played the phonograph to cover the most harmless talk, in order to avoid annoyance. Diplomats had their telephones arranged so that they could be disconnected. If one could turn the dial with the receiver on the hook, or if he couldn't, I forget which, that was supposed to mean the wire was tapped. Our office had two phones. The dial turned on one and did not on the other. It made no difference to us because we had nothing to hide in our conversations. We were just newspapermen, without seditious thoughts or political animosity.

My home telephone apparently was tapped. Kay was talking to a Spanish woman friend one day. They started the conversation in English, but since French was easier for the Spaniard they switched into that language. A woman's voice came on the line and said, "Quit speaking French, speak Italian." "But I don't know Italian," the Spanish woman said in French. "Then you shouldn't be in Italy," the voice asserted. That ended the conversation.

After Italy entered the war one of the first censorship "supervisions" which Rocco had predicted was the admitted tapping of our office telephones. We had formerly telephoned much of our news to London, for cable relay. We now telephoned it to Bern.

All calls passed through a switchboard in the Ministry of Interior. There somebody listened and cut us off whenever he thought something censorable was to follow. It often happened automatically on the word "Mussolini" or "Ciano." I would plead for the resumption of the communication, reading the Italian text of an official Stefani communiqué that the interruptor refused to pass, apparently because he had not yet

seen it. It was like talking to God, because no voice ever replied, no sound came but the click when the line went dead and the click when it again came to life. Invariably, if the line was interrupted, I would call the press ministry and explain the situation. An official would promise to give the necessary instructions and sometimes did.

The Interior Ministry's antiespionage censorship was independent of the press ministry's. There our telephone calls were intercepted, transcribed on cylinders, typed out by a special staff and translated. Several times I was confronted with the translation of a dispatch, complete with address, signature and time of transmission, to hear a complaint about it. Usually, when I received a summons, I took the day's news file with me and was able to point out to the official, who understood English but never bothered to look up the original transcription, that a harmless sentence had been poorly translated to mean something else.

One specific thing we were forbidden to report was any traveling of Mussolini or Ciano, particularly if they went to Germany to consult Hitler or Ribbentrop. There were ways of getting such a news item past the unseen, unheard censor on the telephone, although we might be punished with a three-day suspension of our telephone service, after the transcription of our conversation disclosed the full meaning between the lines. To prevent that, the press ministry imposed a rule that a copy of every dispatch must be delivered to the ministry thirty minutes before it was communicated by telephone. The radio company automatically sent to the ministry every dispatch delivered to it, before transmitting it.

The control of the telephone communications then passed to the press ministry. The long-distance operator had to request the ministry's authorization before making the connection. The ministry would often withhold its authorization and never say anything to us about it, so that we lost many minutes soliciting calls. Finally I induced the officials to telephone us

as soon as they decided we could not send a certain item. Frequently they would authorize the communication after we agreed to change a word or a phrase. There were ways of beating this regulation, which shall remain a professional secret, and we often did it, but one was always careful to do it only if he had an important bit of news of such a nature that it would not offend the ministry to the extent of punishing the violator.

For many months we fought a daily battle in the war of nerves. We could be demoralized by the censorship and the occult surveillance of the secret police if we ever weakened. We were sick that we had to withhold so much of the truth. Yet we knew the editors and readers wanted a man on the spot.

The censorship may not have been always intelligent, but it was complete. Yet the press ministry insisted to the last that there was no censorship, we were free to write as we pleased, but would have to take the consequences. They had the intelligence to blush, without answering, however, if we asked whether the withholding of communications, the request for the alteration or elimination of a story, was not censorship.

In fairness to the police I must say they never bothered us. The chief of the foreign section in Rome was Commendatore Aguesci, who was always courteous.

The only thing Aguesci could not do was obtain permission for Kay to spend the summer of 1940 at a popular seaside resort, Forte dei Marmi, with Nancy Matthews, the wife of Herbert L. Matthews, of the New York *Times*. Nancy went to Forte and found special permission was required of foreigners to stay there. She informed Kay, who applied for the permission in Rome.

Days dragged by without word from Aguesci. We learned the application was being shuttled back and forth between the Rome police, the Forte dei Marmi police, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Popular Culture. The date of Kay's departure came and passed. The two weeks for which

she had reserved a hotel room passed. Finally the press ministry suggested that Kay go to some other resort, Venice, for instance. By that time the summer had passed. Nancy Matthews completed her stay at Forte dei Marmi simply by refusing to leave. The irony was that while Kay was American, Nancy was English by birth and it was England, not the United States, that was then the enemy.

We had to content ourselves with the beach at Ostia and that was a bother because, while I had a permit as a foreign correspondent to operate my car, it was forbidden for a wife to ride in it. The car could be used only for "essential," and not for what the Italians delightfully called "voluptuous," travel. The only way we could reach Ostia for a swim was by an overcrowded train.

The seaside resorts farther away from Rome were forbidden to all foreigners but Germans. Not even the Danes and the Hungarians, who were virtually Axis allies, could obtain permission to visit them. As a result, German tourists invaded Capri, Venice, and the Riviera. One bourgeois Italian family of our acquaintance cut short their visit to the shore because, they said, there were too many "arrogant Germans."

The delights of the Roman campagna were left to us.

Frank Gervasi had introduced us to Frascati, Rocca di Papa, Tivoli, Monte Cavo, especially delightful for Sunday loafing in the autumn after the grape harvest, when one tasted the new wine, ate lasagne verde, talked lazily in the mellow sunlight among vine leaves and flowers. We went to Lake Nemi to see the two barges of Caligula taken from the bottom at tremendous cost and placed in an especially built museum to gratify a whim of Mussolini's.

In the summer we bathed at Ostia, or had picnics on the more secluded beach at Fregene. Some Sundays a large group would cycle out the Appian Way, or to the sulphur springs of Acque Albule, near Tivoli.

After the motoring restrictions became effective we had

to find diplomatic friends with more ample rations and fewer limitations on the use of their cars to take us to the old familiar places. Otherwise we had to stay in Rome and be content with the flowers on the Spanish Steps, the magnificent architectural line and form of the ancient city with the patine that Fascism had refrained from erasing because it brought tourists in the days of peace. From the terrace at Rosati's, on the Via Veneto, one could see the splendid Pinciana gate in the old Aurelian wall and watch crowds of Italian families strolling in the broad avenue before they went home from church.

With the war, because of the blackout, there were no more open-air operas in the fantastically beautiful ruins of the Baths of Caraculla. But the blackout made it all the more worthwhile to visit the Coliseum by moonlight, until it and the other monuments were piled high with sandbags. The museums were closed, their priceless paintings and statuary stored away.

Rome never had any café life in the American sense of the word. Night life barely existed, perhaps because of the Vatican and the city's long history as a religious capital. With the wartime ban on dancing the ABC closed, but the fashionable restaurants remained open, such places as the Casino delle Rose, the Biblioteca, where bottles instead of books lined the shelves, the subterranean Ulpia, the Casino Valadier in the Borghese gardens, Alfredo's.

The blackout forced these places to hide their doorways with doubled curtains of navy blue or black. It was hard to get around at night because the stock of flashlight batteries was soon exhausted and Italy lacked the materials to make more. People wore luminous buttons in their lapels to avoid collisions in the streets. Italians stayed home or went to the movies.

We hated to be cut off from our Italian friends, because Italians are gay. That explained perhaps part of the Italian aversion to the humorless Germans and Japanese. We had

enjoyed many evenings of amusing conversation. Cultural discussion was limited because Italian literature, under Fascism, was mediocre and so too was the art. The best sellers of the Italian bookstores were translations of American successes, Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, the works of Steinbeck, Faulkner, and Erskine Caldwell. Every news stand sold yellow-backed translations of American and British mystery stories until the Ministry of Popular Culture restricted their publication.

After the British and French members departed the Union Club was denied us as a rendezvous. It had been a place where one could keep in touch with the commercial life of Italy through doctors, lawyers, bankers, and businessmen. The police closed it, despite the efforts of the American and Italian members to keep it open. The whisky stock went to Ciano's golf club.

We had little choice but to spend more evenings with our friends in the diplomatic corps and play bridge with the Greeks, the Yugoslavs, the Afghans, and the Persians. The diplomats had radios, of course, and the correspondents were allowed them, although it was forbidden for Italians to listen to non-Axis broadcasts, and we had to sign pledges that we would not divulge any foreign radio news to any Italian. From the radio we had the only unadulterated news from the outside world and, as a consequence, were able to talk fairly intelligently on world affairs. The propaganda ministry established a noon press conference, always preceded by a special conference for the German correspondents, but it rarely yielded any Italian news, let alone comment on foreign news.

We obtained a better view of the Fascist line from the radio commentators, Ansaldo and Mario Appelius, the star reporter of Mussolini's *Il Popolo d'Italia*, who had traveled the world and returned home to become a highly paid propagandist. Appelius denounced America in his broadcasts almost as often as he did Britain. He received not only a large salary from the

Duce's newspaper, but several thousand lire weekly from the official broadcasting monopoly EIAR, and several thousand more from the Stefani agency for writing propaganda pieces.

One of the few Italians who dared to see us was a high-ranking officer who was safe because he was in the army's military intelligence service, whose abbreviated title is SIM. From him I learned the military intelligence, too, was watching over the correspondents and that I had a "clean dossier."

Still another surveillance was exercised by the German Gestapo. In our case the agent was a Nazi journalist. I never resented his nosiness because he was occasionally an excellent source of information, until relations between the United States and Germany became so bad he could not very well maintain the attitude of friendliness.

The Vatican maintained its own censorship on the mails and telephone communications of its tiny state, principally to prevent anything being said or written that might compromise its position as a neutral. My relations at the Vatican were purely formal, although Cardinal Canali, the administrative head of Vatican City, was friendly and I dined once with the bearded French Cardinal Tisserant, who looked after the Church's Near Eastern affairs.

Mussolini succeeded in censoring *L'Osservatore Romano* so far as its war news was concerned. In May the paper dropped its political matter, but retained the war communiqués. June 12, after Italy's declaration of war, the paper failed to appear, the first time it had missed an edition in more than fifty years. One of its editors informed me that the Italian government refused to permit the distribution of the British communiqué among Italians. The Vatican authorities debated the advisability of suspending publication indefinitely. The next day the paper appeared without the war communiqués of either side. It never published the war bulletins thereafter and the circulation dropped immediately to a few thousand copies. Whenever the pope made a speech, however,

Osservatore's newsstand sales rose for the day because the Italian press invariably suppressed any papal criticism of totalitarianism, but the Vatican organ invariably published the full text.

With family life at the foundation of the Italian social structure the humbler mass sought few diversions outside the home, where under the force of circumstances they carried out the recommendations of the Church and Mussolini that they rear children. For a few lire they could go to the movies, but after the Fascist film monopoly shut off the Hollywood importations many Italians complained that they found no enjoyment in the product of Rome's Cine Cittá. The opera was too expensive for the poor and since they could not afford radio sets they were denied the broadcasts from the opera houses, unless they went to a bar, every little one of which had a radio.

Our acquaintances at the bottom and the top of the social scale were few, but sufficient to inform us of their mode of life. I knew one working class family. The husband was a boss bricklayer in the building of Rome's new central railroad station and his wage was high for a laboring man. It was one thousand lire, or the equivalent of fifty dollars, a month. They had three children, lived in a two-room flat without running water in a slum at the edge of town, and the wife worked as a charwoman to earn the rent. They were industrious, clean, honest, and respectable. For them, a chicken dinner was a once-a-year Christmas treat.

XVIII

Greeks Without Gifts

Fascist Italy, as a military power, was dashed to the ground in the first year of war by the greatest defeat, the only real defeat, the nation had suffered since it became a united Italy.

Caporetto, in World War I, was only an unfortunate episode by comparison. For a generation that disastrous rout of October 24, 1917, when the Italian armies in Venezia were caught in an Austro-German attack, has caused Italians anguish.

Yet Caporetto was avenged. The Italians lost 320,000 men in killed, wounded, and missing. But the strength of Austria was so sapped by starvation and internal weakness by the time of the next Austrian offensive in June, 1918, that the Italians easily repulsed it, delivered a smashing attack in late October, captured 600,000 prisoners, and ended the war on the Austrian front with an armistice on November 4, a week before the general armistice.

From the defeat of 1940-41, Italy has not yet staggered to its feet. It was not the Greeks alone who defeated Italy, though they fought an epic of history that may be remembered with Thermopylae. It was not the British alone in Africa who did it, although they helped.

Fascism beat the Italian army, the navy, and the air force. Conflict between the army and the party, Blackshirt dry rot in the military, was largely to blame.

Mussolini's precipitous blundering was primarily to blame. Having rushed Italy into a war for which it was woefully unprepared, he dashed it into a campaign against Greece that

was the greatest national disaster in its modern history. It would remain a tragicomedy of war, were it not for the many thousands of deaths, the destruction, the human misery it caused.

It was not the Italian people's war. It was Mussolini's war, although Ciano called it his war among his intimates, to whom he bragged that through his minister to Athens, Emanuele Grazzi, he had bribed the Greeks in key positions, a half-dozen generals, provincial leaders, perhaps cabinet ministers, to betray their country. Grazzi, former consul at New York, was a Ciano man, his assistant when the Duce's son-in-law was in the press ministry.

"We are going to occupy Greece," Ciano was quoted as saying. "I have spent 150,000,000 lire softening the Greeks. They will not resist."

Evidently Mussolini and Ciano were not familiar with the Greek classics, or they had forgotten that Euripides said, "Never trust a Greek." For the Greeks proved to be patriots above bribery. They went to Premier John Metaxas, the wiliest Greek of them all, and he said, "Keep the money, be true to your country, and keep me informed."

At what stage that happened has never been established. We heard of it in November. It was apparently after an Albanian bandit, Daut Hodgia, was killed in a drunken brawl and acquired the posthumous title of Chief of the Albanian Irredentist movement. The Fascist press blazed in August with the indignant story that Hodgia had been brutally murdered in Albanian territory near the Greek frontier and his head carried from village to village within Greek territory by order of the authorities to intimidate the population that wanted to be under Albanian, hence Fascist, rule.

Athens promptly branded this as a lie, as it did the parallel Fascist press charge that British airplanes and warships were using Greek islands as refueling stations for their attacks on Italy and its shipping between the mainland and Libya.

Mussolini had decided that Greece was to be his swag when Hitler showed signs of double-crossing him on the French loot. Smarting under the German decision, the Duce looked about for a quick pushover. He had always wanted the Dalmatian coast, at least, from Yugoslavia, but the Serbs were a fighting people and Hitler needed all the livestock and food he could get from Yugoslavia. This source of supplies would be disrupted if not destroyed by an attack on it.

So Mussolini tried to intimidate Greece before he bribed it.

The tiny wine-growing and marble-quarrying island of Tinos was filled with pilgrims on August 15 for the Feast of the Assumption. They had come to pray before a miraculous ikon in the little whitewashed village. At anchor offshore lay the antiquated Greek cruiser *Helle*. Suddenly a torpedo streaked across the harbor and exploded against the breakwater, wounding some of the pilgrims. Another struck the *Helle*, which caught fire and sank. The torpedoes were fired from an Italian submarine. But the Greek government would not be provoked into a warlike response.

Neither did the Greeks respond to Italian demands, reinforced by the Germans, that Greece end its friendship with Britain, although the Germans were battering London with their first great air offensive.

As August ran into September, Marshal Graziani started the invasion of Egypt. His initial success reassured Mussolini. The press denounced "Greek terrorism in martyred Ciamuria," an ancient designation for the Greek territory adjoining Albania. It said bands of assassins and incendiarists, hired by the Greek government, were murdering Albanians and setting fire to their homes. That fiction had a tragically familiar sound to the Czechoslovaks and the Poles.

Hitler, meanwhile, had his own plans for the Balkans. He wanted to occupy the countries, as he always tried to do, one at a time in a well-prepared progression, without fighting for them if he could avoid it. For the sake of his plan he needed

to pacify relations between Rumania, and Hungary and Bulgaria which wanted back the territory they had lost to that country after the First World War. He had Ribbentrop, backed by the menacing force of the German army, arbitrate those claims in September. Ciano was allowed to participate in the arbitration.

Then Hitler sent Ribbentrop to Rome to soften Mussolini's demands on France. Hitler wanted the French colonies and the French navy for use against the British and he feared that if Mussolini were allowed to despoil France prematurely the navy and the colonies might go over to the Free French forces of General de Gaulle, who had refused to accept his country's surrender to Germany by men who had failed to heed his prewar warnings that modern war was fought with machines as well as men. Ribbentrop also asked the Italians to go softly against Greece. Mussolini's reaction was unsatisfactory, so Hitler had to bring his personal pressure to bear.

The Fuehrer summoned Mussolini to a conference on the Brenner. Behind the curtained windows of an armored train, while planes patrolled the sky, they talked for three hours. Hitler told the Duce of his plans for the gradual penetration of the Balkans. From Hungary they would move into Bucharest, which they did in mid-October, to intimidate the Russians, who might move into Bulgaria before the German march was completed. It was a chess game as Hitler visualized it. I had this from a German correspondent.

"What about Greece?" Mussolini asked.

"All right, you can go in there," Hitler said, in effect, "but you must wait until much later in the game."

Mussolini decided to cross Hitler. He ordered Ciano and Muti, who had aranged the coup in Albania, to repeat it in Greece. That was before Muti bruised his fists against a Fascist grafter.

Ciano dispatched agents to Greece with the bribe money. Muti organized the bombing force. Ciano sent the Greeks

private intimations that all Italy wanted was the severance of economic relations with Britain, the cession to Albania of a strip along the frontier, the cession to Bulgaria of a corridor to the Aegean sea, the right for Italians to construct a road from Albania to Salonica, the use of Greek air bases, and the abdication of King George II with the formation of a pro-Axis government. The Germans were not only acquiescent in this preliminary sounding of the Greeks, but they brought diplomatic pressure to bear when they saw the Italian intentions.

Ciano reported to Mussolini, presumably on the basis of Grazzi's reports to him, that the Greeks would offer only nominal resistance. Mussolini decided to confront Hitler with a fait accompli three weeks later, when the Fuehrer was to meet him at Florence after talking with Pétain.

Mussolini felt that Italy's position as an Axis partner was strong enough to allow of independent action. He had the only Axis navy worthy of the name. He was winning in Africa. He had sent planes up to the Nazi bases on the French side of the Channel to help in the bombardment of Britain.

As for Greece, everybody knew the country was so weak and unwarlike that it could not resist attack. Its army of 140,000 men was poorly trained, was not mechanized, had only poor fortifications and a hundred obsolete planes. Its 310,000 reservists could scarcely be called fighting men. Its navy consisted of a few destroyers, torpedo boats, and submarines.

We were dining at the home of a Yugoslav diplomat on Saturday night, October 26, when I was called to the telephone. The press ministry had announced that Greek troops attacked an Italian frontier post near Koriza that morning, while a branch office of the Italian lieutenant general, Francesco Jacomoni, at Porto Edda, the former Santi Quaranta renamed for Edda Mussolini, was damaged by three bombs exploded by British agents.

Returning to the room where we were having coffee I said to Kay, "The invasion of Greece is about to begin." A German diplomat with whom she had been talking looked at his wife with a glance of chagrin.

At three o'clock the morning of October 28, Grazzi went to Metaxas with a note demanding Greece's unconditional surrender within three hours. Metaxas flung a "No" in the face of the Italian envoy. Italian troops crossed the Albanian border into Greece at six.

What happened afterwards is history, heroic, thrilling, tragic. Italian bribery, German diplomatic pressure, and Fascist fifth-column work had failed to soften the Greeks. Instead of collapsing within a few days as Mussolini had confidently expected, and rising against Metaxas, the Greeks fought. The British rushed in prompt and effective help.

Before the Italians forced their way many miles into Greek territory they were bogged in mud to the bellies of their pack mules. I saw photographs of their floundering, taken by an Italian officer. The Italian soldiers were sent up into the ice and snow of the Pindus Mountains in their summer uniforms.

As in the invasion of Albania the Fascist organization which had been charged with engineering the campaign improvised and bungled. This time it proved disastrous. Wounded men who came back from the front told the doctors who amputated their frozen feet that the docks in the Albanian ports were loaded high with cases of ammunition, food, and supplies, but nobody was distributing it. The Italian army in Albania consisted of seven divisions of bewildered peasants, lacking in essential supply lines, staff work, co-ordination, and efficiency. Two divisions had to remain behind the lines to hold the Albanian population from going into revolt. Two others were the reserves to relieve tired fighters. That left three divisions with which to undertake the offensive.

Against the Italians the Greeks had fifteen divisions, good

staff work, and the spirit of resistance that invasion instills. The Italian air force failed to prevent them from massing their divisions in the region where they knew the Italians intended to drive on Salonica.

The Greek army went forward eagerly to meet the invaders. The women, the old men, and the children of the mountain villages carried food, supplies, and ammunition on their backs to the front over ground which the Greeks said no army supply service could have covered in so short a time.

By mid-November, the Greeks had reversed the invasion and were pushing the Italians back in Albania. Field Marshal General Wilhelm Keitel, chief of the German high command, called Badoglio to Innsbruck and offered German advice and help. Mussolini refused to let the German army come to Italy's aid. He wanted to conquer Greece without Hitler.

It was at this time that I had my only dinner at the aristocratic Caccia Club. Grazzi was there with a party of friends. I was told that he was in disgrace with Mussolini, who had counted on his assurances that the Greeks were so well buttered with lire-bought dollars that they would not fight.

For days there was no mention of the Greek war in the Rome papers while Mussolini sent General Ubaldo Soddu, his undersecretary for war and a high party man, to Albania to press the offensive. Then, as the Greeks captured the Italian base in Albania at Koriza, Mussolini made a speech in which he said that Italy would break the back (reni) of Greece, whether it took two months or twelve months.

"Once I start, I never give up until the end," the Duce shouted.

It was evident that the war on Greece was a political adventure, not a military operation. It was a campaign the high command neither prepared, nor wanted. The party had honeycombed the army with its own men and spies. Farinacci, in his *Regime Fascista*, accused Badoglio of improvidence and

lack of timing. When Badoglio read Farinacci's charge of incompetence he went to Mussolini and said, "I am resigning."

"You are already out, your resignation has already been accepted," Mussolini retorted.

Badoglio then told his friends in clubs and drawing rooms that the invasion was begun against his advice, which was that of the rest of the general staff. He had tried to persuade Mussolini the army was not ready. It was Mussolini who went ahead, although told that the offensive was ill-timed and badly prepared.

Spies reported this to Bocchini, who told Mussolini. For a brief time Badoglio was virtually under house arrest. In addition to the carabineer who patrolled the entrance to his villa as befitted the home of a marshal, an agent in plainclothes took up surveillance of Badoglio's gate, a half-block from our apartment. After a few weeks the watch over Badoglio was relaxed and he retired to his country estate.

When Mussolini asked Badoglio to take over the command in Ethiopia from De Bono, the marshal had gone to the king and exacted a promise that he would be free from Fascist interference if he undertook to save that imperial adventure. When he was ordered to Albania to attack the Greeks he had no recourse to the king, for Vittorio Emanuele had relinquished even his nominal command of the army to Mussolini. Badoglio had protested to the Duce, but a soldier with a soldier's devotion to duty, 69 years old and perhaps tired, Badoglio had carried out his orders.

Badoglio's resignation was followed by that of Admiral Domenico Cavagnari as chief of staff of the navy. To replace him Mussolini appointed Admiral Arturo Riccardi. For Badoglio's post he named General Ugo Cavallero.

Cavallero was short, stout, and sixty, wore pince-nez and had the appearance of a schoolmaster in uniform. The Duce had found him to be a dutiful yes man since the days when Cavallero was his first minister of war. For a long time

Cavallero was out of public life, however, after a scandal over steel contracts for a shipyard, in which his name was involved.

Soddu managed to reorganize the army in Albania and post its regiments on hilltops that commanded valleys and enabled the Italians, by a desperate defense, to keep the Greeks out of Tirana, although the Italian casualties were heavy that winter, mainly from frozen hands and feet.

In February, Hitler decided to rescue the Axis from Italy's defeat at the hands of Greece whether Mussolini wished it or not. With the methodical German attention to plans he summoned the Yugoslav premier, Dragisha Cvetkovich, and the foreign minister, Alexander Cincar-Markovich, to Germany by air to invite Yugoslavia into the Axis. He had already lined up Bulgaria and his troops entered that country from Hungary and Rumania so that, with Yugoslavia in the chain, Greece would be entirely Axis-surrounded.

The Yugoslavs, however, kept the negotiations open throughout most of March, during which Mussolini went to Albania and started a new offensive. Again it was a party show with Starace, the commander of the Blackshirt militia, pulling the string that fired the first gun. The Greeks promptly turned the attack into a counteroffensive that drove a disgruntled Mussolini back to Rome.

About midnight of March 14 two British planes torpedoed the hospital ship *Po* in Valona harbor. It was floodlighted and marked with the Red Cross emblem to distinguish it from military shipping. Among the nurses aboard the ship was Edda Mussolini Ciano. She jumped overboard with the others and after swimming about for twenty minutes was fished out of the harbor into a rowboat. Three other nurses lost their lives. The ship apparently was empty of wounded. Edda's father rewarded her with a medal. The Fascist press never made much of this "atrocity." A newspaperman told me it was because the Duce, for his security, was passing the

night aboard the hospital ship. Presumably some spy had got the word to the British. Mussolini was not eager for London to explain why its airmen had fired the torpedoes.

After the abortive Italian attempt at a new offensive it was evident that the Germans would have to finish off Greece. Yugoslavia was brought into the Axis on March 25 against the wishes of its people, who angrily rebelled at the prospect of what it meant.

Then began, and soon ended, the war that nobody wanted —the Axis war against Yugoslavia. The Yugoslavs did not want it. They had remained neutral and were unprepared to resist the crushingly superior Nazi machine. The Italians did not want it for they could not even defeat the Greeks. The Germans did not want it, because it upset their plans for the occupation of the Balkans without a fight and meant the disruption of a vital supply source.

But a country avowedly hostile to the Axis in Europe could not be tolerated, particularly in the Balkans. On April 6 the Germans marched into Yugoslavia and Greece.

Soon Yugoslavia was overrun and dismembered, but the Serbs were not entirely beaten, as the world knows. By a mighty effort and at great cost in casualties the Italians managed to force the Greeks slowly back to their frontier while the Germans crushed their defenses in Greece. A Greek general surrendered the valiant armies in Epirus and Macedonia to General Carlo Geloso on April 23.

Rome took the news quietly, without the display of flags that marked the fall of France, but with a strange apathy and an anxious suspense at the demonstration of German might so close to home. For the Germans were already in the Italian midst.

The press ministry organized a trip to the late Albanian front and invited three American correspondents, including myself, although it was simultaneously blaming the United

States for the invasion of Yugoslavia because it said Roosevelt had encouraged the Yugoslavs to resist the Axis.

We went by train to Brindisi, which we found to be a military base, with soldiers directing traffic at the street intersections. By ship at night we crossed the Adriatic to Durazzo, through waters freshly sprinkled with mines by the British, who were still fighting a rear guard action against the Germans in Greece. The ship was taking supplies and a dozen prostitutes to the tired troops in Albania. When we asked the captain how long a ship stayed afloat after it struck a mine, he said, "Oh, about ninety seconds." One of the press officers reached down in the blackout and unlaced the heavy ski boots he was wearing for mountain climbing in Albania.

At Durazzo we found the British minister to Belgrade, Ronald Ian Campbell, and his staff, for information of whose whereabouts the American embassy in Rome was inquiring at the Foreign Ministry. There were ninety-one, including a few Greek, Belgian, and Polish diplomats, in the party. They had been three days at Durazzo's only decent hotel, the Albergo dei Dogi. The confusion was so great that nobody had reported their presence to Rome.

From one of the party we heard an amazing tale of British daring and Italian confusion. A British submarine had arranged to rescue the diplomatic fugitives from Belgrade at the Adriatic port of Cattaro. They were waiting on the dock for the submarine when the Italians occupied the port. The submarine *Regent* arrived to find the area occupied by the Italian army. It ran up a white ensign, put an officer ashore to negotiate with the Italian authorities for the evacuation of the diplomats, and took an Italian officer aboard as a hostage.

For nine hours the submarine lay in the harbor, while the negotiations dragged. Then two Italian planes came over, dived at the submarine, dropped several bombs, and raked it with a burst of machine gun fire, wounding an officer. The submarine submerged and escaped from the harbor. The

Italians took the British party to Durazzo in two tourist buses and three trucks, under a military escort.

From Durazzo a broken-down bus that had been used to transport troops took us to Tirana, then through grim, desolate, rugged mountains, with precipices, chasms, and torrents, through scenery of awful beauty, to Porto Edda. From Tirana to Porto Edda was an all-day ride over rough roads and we had started early in the morning, without bothering to shave. There we commandeered an empty house and some water and washed up on a terrace overlooking the sea.

Most of the party were German correspondents, organized under a Nazi-designated leader, Baron von Langen, who later retired from journalism to head a branch of the Nazi party activities in Italy. We had been on peaceful, if not cordial terms, on the trip and one German even joined us in a cramped game of bridge on the bus.

At Porto Edda, however, the commandant of the port, an Italian naval officer, turned his back on the Germans and chatted with the three Americans, while we lathered our chins and dried our razors. The commandant, who spoke English, leaned against a railing with equal informality and told us of the plan to occupy Corfu, where we were to accompany the invaders.

The German correspondents fumed. I could see them, out of the corner of one eye, go into a huddle with their leader at an opposite corner of the terrace. Then von Langen called an Italian press officer to him and there was a consultation. As a result the press officer took the commandant from us, introduced the Germans to him, and asked that he repeat what he had told us. This the officer did with the utmost formality.

That evening, after a whispered colloquy with the press officers, the commandant had only the German correspondents at his table. All the other Italian officers in the port, for they were few, ate at another long table with us, the Americans.

Before dawn the next morning, after passing the night on

the terrace in sleeping bags, we embarked on an oil tanker, its decks loaded with troops, mules, and equipment, for the short run to Corfu, under the escort of two torpedo-firing mosquito boats.

Our invasion of Corfu with three battalions of Italian troops was a bloodless one. We found that it had been captured from the air.

We arrived on Wednesday. The Italian planes had started operating over the island Sunday afternoon by dropping leaflets which called for its surrender under the threat of a bombardment from the air and sea until the city and every village were destroyed. From the Greeks we heard what happened, how the Italians frustrated a plan of the Greeks to deliver the island to the Germans in preference to the Italians.

With the leaflets in their hands the officials of Corfu and the elder statesmen met to decide what to do. Represented were the military and civilian authorities, the Greek Orthodox archbishop, and important citizens. The civilians counselled surrender and they prevailed.

A delegation of two Greek army officers and two civilians took motorcycles by motorboat to the mainland and sped to Janina, the German-captured center of Epirus. This was done because the Greeks felt that if the Italians took the island they would never get it back, whereas the Germans might eventually return it to Greek control. Their aim therefore was to surrender it to the German army. This was done. At midnight Sunday the authorities of Corfu received a telegram that the German terms for surrender had been accepted at Janina.

At nine-fifty Monday morning an Italian plane landed in Corfu harbor and ten Italian officers stepped ashore. They were surprised to see the German flag flying from the harbor master's office. He was surprised to see them. He had run up the swastika because he expected to turn the port over to Germans.

While more than a hundred Italian warplanes circled over the housetops of Corfu the Italians gave the Greeks fifteen minutes to surrender the island. The commander of the place surrendered the garrison, but he said he was not qualified to surrender the island, for a superior officer was in command who had taken a battalion into the woods in the interior. There some 2,100 Greek troops, and much of the city's population, had taken up defensive positions.

Meanwhile, three German officers arrived in a motorboat to take possession of the island. They found the Italians, who informed their allies that Fascist forces had already occupied it. The Germans left.

The Italian commander sent an ultimatum to the commander of the Greek forces in the northern part of the island calling for surrender by three o'clock Tuesday afternoon, or the city of Corfu and the forty-five villages would be destroyed. On recommendation of the Greek archbishop that the civilans be spared now that the fight was lost, the entire island was surrendered. As we arrived with the troops of occupation the Greeks were coming down from the hills a few at a time, in peasant dress, having discarded their uniforms in the woods.

Corfu was pitiful, but proud. The city had been badly bombed, once on Christmas Day by the Italians, while the British and the Germans were observing a Christmas truce. In that raid alone, we were told, fifteen civilians were killed and thirty injured.

Nothing remained in the shops or in the market. At the leading tourist hotel, which the Italians promptly took over, we were served a luxury ration, for the Greeks, of one slice of bread, a plate of beans, a thin slice of cheese, and a single orange. In the hotel and in the streets the Greeks stood aloof from the Italian attempts to fraternize.

From Corfu we returned to Porto Edda and completed our six-hundred-mile tour of the front. We visited Perati Bridge, over the Viosa River gorge, where it formed the frontier be-

tween Greece and Albania. A general pointed to the rows of rude graves on a hillside and told us how he had been forced to sacrifice his men in a ten-day push against a stubborn rear guard of Greeks because his orders were to reach the bridge before units of the Hitler Regiment, coming from the Greek side, could cross it into Albania. They had to meet simultaneously at the bridge.

"If I could only have advanced more slowly, I could have saved many of them," he said. "The shame of it is that so many who fell were officers. They had to go ahead as examples to the men."

At Monastery Hill, so-called because a Greek monastery had once stood there, we found the Italians clearing the ground for a war cemetery. We saw a ground churned by shell fire, only blackened stumps left of the trees, for that hill was the key to the defense of Berat, Valona, and Tirana. It was constantly under cross fire from Greek positions in the mountains. The Italians lived there for months on canned food and rain water, in snow-covered trenches, with only a blanket and a tent as their protection against the bitter cold. In this sector alone, fifteen thousand men, including seven hundred officers, were killed and wounded.

A young, bearded lieutenant called me aside.

"Whatever you write, don't say the Italian soldier is not brave," he said. His tone was bitter.

"If you could have seen my men, in cotton breeches, some of them wearing canvas sandals, cold, hungry, without cigarettes, guarding their position, poveri ragazzi! Whatever you write about this war for the Americans, I beg you not to say that those poor boys were not brave."

On the way back to Tirana our bus passed a division of troops marching on foot in the same direction. They were going home and they were glad. But they were not happy. On paper, they had won the war. In reality, they were defeated.

In Tirana we were addressed by Verlaci, Cavallero, and

Jacomoni on the glorious Italian victory. We also learned, but could not report, that Vittorio Emanuele was coming to inspect the front. Flagstaffs had been erected all along Tirana's main avenue for his first visit.

An Albanian official, in the privacy of his office, said to me slyly, "I hope he comes as the King of Albania, not as the King of Italy."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"You know what I mean," he said.

Shortly after that the king paid his visit to Albania—and his car was fired on by an Albanian youth as it speeded out to the airport for the king's return flight to Rome. The official announcement said the youth was a mad poet, angered because the government refused to encourage his verse writing, that the verses were doggerel. Perhaps that was correct. The boy was a cook in Verlaci's home and cooks are not always good poets. At any rate, the boy was hanged.

Galeazzo Ciano probably reached the apex of his career as the representative of his father-in-law in the negotiations which resulted in the Italian-German military alliance. Certainly "his" war on Greece added nothing to his stature. Although Ciano was supposed to have participated in it as the leader of a bomber squadron, he stayed at Bari, often flying back to Rome to receive the diplomats.

Count Ciano was the junior partner of Mussolini in the binding of Italy to the German war machine. Afterward he was assigned the job of hoodwinking the British and French ambassadors until his father-in-law decided to put Italy into the war. He was well qualified for the task, as Sir Noel Charles's remark indicated.

He was a clever young executive assistant to carry out the decisions that Mussolini made. That helped to account for his meteoric rise from obscurity, after he received his first political appointment in 1933.

Some in Rome believed that Mussolini, thinking of the day when he would be obliged to relinquish the reins of power, looked about him and detected in Galeazzo one whose qualities and talents were more susceptible of development than those of any other possible candidate for the succession. Ciano's wife, Edda, undoubtedly had a hand in his dazzling career.

Lifted from the obscurity of the Italian consular service, Ciano was made chief of the government's press bureau in 1933, undersecretary of state for press and propaganda in 1934, minister of press and propaganda in 1935, minister of foreign affairs in 1936.

Although their offices were in different buildings, half a mile apart, Ciano saw Mussolini at least once, and often several times, a day. He could always ask the Duce's opinion by direct telephone. Despite their family relationship Mussolini always made Ciano aware that he was only a subordinate, and furthermore that the Duce did not tolerate drones.

There was a story that Mussolini asked Ciano one day to call at the Villa Torlonia at seven o'clock in the morning to discuss some important affair of state. Ciano arrived after eight. "You are over an hour late," Mussolini said. "I am extremely sorry," Ciano replied, "but my valet forgot to wake me. I discharged him immediately." "You have done very wrong," said Mussolini. "Ministers should rely on themselves, not on their servants. See that he is hired again immediately."

Acquaintances said that Galeazzo had less force of character than his father, Admiral Costanzo Ciano, who had influence with Mussolini, was minister of communications, and later president of the emasculated Chamber of Deputies. But the son was shrewd and intelligent.

Young Ciano was one of the first hundred-per-cent Fascist statesmen, if that term may be applied to him, for he was a boy in short trousers when he joined the Disperata section of Fascist fighting squads in Florence and participated with it in

many of the bloody episodes before the March on Rome in 1922, when he was 19 years old.

In his first important work as undersecretary, then as minister of press and propaganda, he showed his organizing ability by improvising a complex propaganda machine for internal purposes that proved its efficiency in the Ethiopian war. To Ciano's efforts has been attributed the credit if Mussolini, for the first time in his life, found most of the Italian people solidly behind him at a certain moment.

During the Ethiopian campaign Ciano left his post as minister to serve at the front as an air force captain in command of a squadron of heavy bombers, which he christened Disperata in memory of the Florence days. He received two silver medals for valor.

American newspapermen who were in East Africa spoke of Ciano highly as an agreeable and charming companion, both in work and play, who delighted in singing American songs. Diplomats in Rome found him to be seemingly frank, good-humored, unaffected, with a great capacity for making friends.

In appearance Ciano conforms to the popular idea of the typical Italian. He is below middle height, thick-set, broad-shouldered, and very swarthy, with black hair. Although he has practiced swimming, riding, fencing, motoring, flying, and golf, he has been unable to overcome his tendency to overweight.

He has aped Mussolini even to making his signature resemble that of the Duce, until he looks like a younger edition of his father-in-law, especially in uniform, which he is fond of wearing. He mimics Mussolini in tricks of posture, even to the jutting chin.

Ciano's appointment to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, within two months after he returned from Ethiopia, was resented by the public because it smacked of nepotism. For a time he gained some popularity, but he never entrenched him-

self in the affections of the Italian people. He became, like Mussolini, the object of gossip.

One heard in Rome that Ciano was rapidly becoming one of Italy's richest men, if not already its richest. The speed with which he built a fortune was a greater private scandal than the rapidity with which he rose from vice-consul to foreign minister.

Others grew rich under Fascism. But Ciano did it faster and on a greater scale. The ways in which he acquired his wealth are various. He had quite a bit to begin with. Some say graft figured in the later acquisitions. Others said his official position allowed him to play the market, depressing and buying the stocks of prosperous companies until he and a few cronies had gained control at a cheap price.

Ciano's agents have bought great areas of rich Tuscany farmland in the famous Chianti wine country. He owns corporations, a newspaper, other valuable properties. His apartment in Rome, which occupied the whole floor of a modern building in the most fashionable quarter, was richly furnished and the reputed scene of lavish entertainment. A crooning guitar player, who went about Rome as a sort of troubadour, told me Ciano often hired him to play at parties in his home.

Ciano enjoyed life in a lusty way. He danced cheek-to-cheek and liked a crowd of girls around him, at dinner or on the beach.

When the chancelleries of the world were feverishly preoccupied with the German-Soviet bombshell pact of August, 1939, Ciano lay on the beach at Ostia, stroking the leg of a blonde within view of half-a-dozen diplomats. Someone has said that when the German politicos seek relaxation from their cares, they take a pill. The Italian politicians had other ways of surcease and relaxation.

XIX

The Defender of Islam

An officer of my acquaintance asked me in the winter of 1940–41 if it was true that the British treated the captured officers in their prison camps in India as gentlemen and "better than they do the Blackshirts." I told him I had read something to that effect.

"I've always wanted to see India," the Italian said. "I think I will ask for service in Africa."

He was only joking, for he actually asked to go to Albania. But his joke was an insight into an average, intelligent army officer's attitude toward what was going on in North Africa. This man was no more nor less of a defeatist than the average Italian. He was not an Anglophile, for he had no first-hand knowledge of the British or their language. He was no coward or slacker, for he was decorated in Albania and promoted. But he knew, as tens of thousands of Italians surrendered to General Wavell's Army of the Nile, that Mussolini had blundered in Libya, as he had in Albania, and that Fascism was a failure.

When Mussolini went to Libya in 1937 he was handed a sword by the subjugated Mohammedans of that finally pacified Italian stretch of sand, and took upon himself the title of the Defender of Islam.

He reassured the Egyptians that his intention was to defend, and never attack them. But a dream was born in his brain. Mussolini wanted to do what Napoleon had desired but never achieved. He wanted to ride into Cairo on a white horse.

A French diplomat said that Hitler was at a dinner in Berlin shortly after that, when the conversation turned on the presentation of the sword to Mussolini. The Fuehrer laughed and with some gusto said he had learned that of the 250,000 lire to have been subscribed by Moslem chiefs for the blade, made in Florence, the Duce found himself obliged to make up a deficit of 30,000 lire.

It was worth it to Mussolini. He was able the next year to have unveiled by Balbo in Tripoli a colossal bronze equestrian statue of himself, with flowing robes, brandishing the Sword of Islam. I saw it in February, 1940, when I went through Libya to Cairo for a vacation.

Whatever other war plans Mussolini might have, the expulsion of the British from Egypt was his main objective. Ansaldo, informed by Ciano, said so in August, 1940. It was the keystone of Fascism's program for imperial expansion.

Possession of the cotton-rich valley of the Nile would give Italy a complete semicircle of holdings from Tripoli to the middle of Africa's east coast, a stranglehold on Suez, and an open road to India and all that vast subcontinent offers to a conquering army. It also would open up a route to the Near Eastern oil. It was a grandiose dream.

After Mussolini thrust Italy into the war he became impatient to realize his dream of the white horse bearing him into Cairo. His troops from Ethiopia occupied British Somaliland with comparative ease, adding another desert to the Duce's collection. He could hardly wait for the biggest thing in Africa. With a Libyan army of 250,000 men, he had Graziani attempt an invasion of Egypt in September, to coincide with the German Luftwaffe's attack on England.

The Duce thought he had the mastery of air in North Africa and whoever had that could force the enemy to die of thirst and hunger in the desert by cutting off his supplies, destroying his troops on the march, and breaking up every attempt at attack.

The Italians did invade Egypt. They got as far as Sidi Barrani, about seventy-five miles within the Egyptian frontier, and there they stopped. Something had gone wrong and we thought in Rome that it was the water supply for the four-hundred-mile march across the waterless waste of the superheated desert. It takes a quart of water a day to keep a man in fighting, or even in marching, trim, not to count the gallons needed for the tanks and trucks. It was assumed that the ornamental iron fences which were being cut down with acetylene torches throughout Rome were to be used to build a pipeline for the army in Egypt.

They were used for that purpose. But water was not the only thing in which Graziani's army was short. It lacked tanks, and trucks, and guns. Furthermore, Italy did not have air supremacy in North Africa.

In December the British attacked and the Italian invasion of Egypt, like that of Greece, became an invasion-in-reverse. The British marched across Cyrenaica to Agedabia, beyond Bengasi, taking more than 100,000 prisoners. They captured seventy miles of water pipelines, all the Italian arms, supplies, roads, fortifications, camps. All the labor of Graziani's men for an offensive on the British railhead at Marsa Matruh was lost. Most of the supplies and equipment could not be replaced, because Italy simply did not have them.

It was the same story of unpreparedness, of friction between the army and the Fascist leaders, of Fascist inefficiency, of lowered morale among the men as in Albania.

Graziani, like Badoglio, tried to exonerate himself and lay the blame where it belonged, on the impetuous head of Mussolini.

In a lengthy report to the Duce he reminded Mussolini that he had stopped to prepare an offensive, on his orders, against Marsa Matruh; that the zone lacked water; that he had to start building an aqueduct, and a road from Fort Capuzzo on the frontier to Sidi Barrani. He had massed troops, equip-

ment, and supplies. Some of the units had to walk hundreds of kilometers afoot for lack of transport.

"In December we lacked only a complement of motor vehicles which, as you know, were pouring in from the mainland," Graziani said.

I had seen the docks at Naples crowded with trucks, armored cars, and tanks when I visited Naples that December. And I knew what Graziani meant between the lines. They were not pouring into Libya fast enough.

"The essential reason for the enemy's lightninglike initial success," Graziani continued, "must be attributed to the crushing superiority of the enemy's armored units."

Graziani reminded Mussolini of what the Duce must have known all along, that his troops were within range of British naval guns.

"The British Fleet constantly held under its powerful offensive action our columns operating along the seacoast," Graziani reported.

"The British aviation, evidently reinforced by new units, continually attacked our columns on the march, strongholds occupied by our troops, back areas, our supply bases, and aviation fields and forts at Tobruk and Bardia."

The Italians later said they were outnumbered five to one in North Africa. Where were the eight million bayonets, of which Mussolini had once boasted? He had the men, at home, but not the bayonets, or rather not the uniforms, trucks, food, equipment, and arms.

The Italian air force had failed. It was the creature of the Fascist party. Mussolini never tired of stating that he had recognized the future of air power immediately after World War I and that he gave Italy an aviation where it had virtually none before.

The Italian air force was designed to be the striking force of the new regime, from the day twenty years ago when an Italian general, Giulio Douhet, invented the theory of victory

through air power. Fascism made the fliers particular heroes of the new militarized Italy. They cut the finest figures on the Via Veneto. Mussolini was an air pilot. So, too, were his sons, Ciano, the young men the Duce chose for his cabinet ministers.

The youngsters who made up the mass of the Italian air corps, and I knew some of them extremely well, went into the war thinking they were the best in the world. They were good. They were better than most pilots would have been after only fifty hours of solo-flying which entitled them to wings because Italy did not have enough aviation gasoline to give them more training, although in America it takes 250 hours to get a license, and then you can't fly a bomber until you have had still more experience. Yet the Italians were not good enough, and I say that of friends who piloted fighters over Finland and fighters and bombers over Greece. I say it as one who has flown with Italian pilots and admired their skill and daring.

The trouble was that the ministers and high-ranking officers who knew what was wrong with Italian aviation were getting rich on the graft and patronage that were the due of Fascists who knew how to keep their mouths shut. Italy developed new planes, but always too late.

As for the poorly trained pilots, with their inferior planes that were shot down over France, England, Egypt, Greece, and Malta, I mourned for them, as I did for an artillery lieutenant who asked for service in Libya, although an aunt who was a Jewess had to leave Italy, and who was killed in a needless war. The Fascists may say that Mussolini's Italy is rich in such young men.

As the arm that was to outmode sea power the Italian air force, despite perfectly placed bases and a narrow sea, was a failure. The commanders soon recognized the value of torpedo-launching planes and did a lot of damage to Britain's Mediterranean Fleet. But the Italian fliers could not bomb

Malta out of the Mediterranean and the Italians themselves told the story of a fictitious interview between Mussolini and Hitler. "Why don't you take Malta?" asked the Fuehrer. "Malta is an island, too," the Duce said, with pointed reference to England.

The Italian air force was unable to keep British convoys out of the Mediterranean and the British Fleet even entered the Adriatic to shell Valona. British naval guns shelled Genoa, too, and because the negligence of somebody left Genoa unprotected from the air, the Fascist planes never caught up with the assailants, who had swept Genoa's main artery with their fire up to and into the railroad station.

As the eyes of the army the air force was unable to let Graziani know that Wavell's army was being moved across hundreds of miles of desert to launch the offensive that defeated the Italians there.

As a bombing force the Italian air squadrons failed to smash the Greek communications, despite the inadequate air defense of that pitifully small army, or to make an impression on England. They were withdrawn from the Channel because the planes were not good enough for daylight raids and the pilots were not trained for night flying. The Italian fliers who escorted the German bombers often got lost because only the squadron leader had navigation instruments in his plane and the others, if they were cut off, could not take their bearings.

The Italian fliers never lacked bravery. They never ran away from a dogfight with British planes of more speed and better guns, so far as I know. Their failure was due to Fascist politics and corruption.

The Italian style of bombing also was bad. At the outset of the war the Italians used the technique they had employed against the defenseless Ethiopians and the greatly inferior force of Republican Spain. Without a proper bomb sight they flew over and dropped their bombs in haphazard fashion.

Eventually, the Germans came to Italy and taught the

Italians dive-bombing. They turned their stuka designs over to Italian factories, which copied the plane and called it the picchiatello. In January the presence of German air squadrons in Italy was officially admitted. All the Italian fliers were brought back from the Channel front.

Mussolini and Hitler met secretly that month in Germany. Afterwards the Germans took control in Italy. The Fascist editorials spoke of the coming increase in Axis "co-operation." We were able to report, in veiled sentences, on the unity of command in German hands, as the troops, the technical and political experts, poured in.

My journal shows that on January 28 I wrote of a possible German landing in North Africa, at a time when it was already an accomplished fact, although it was still supposed to be a military secret. We were kept busy denying silly stories abroad of rioting against the Germans in Italian cities, until the students were brought out to parade in the streets and sing patriotic songs for our further edification.

In February, Mussolini delivered a speech in which he made the first announcement that German mechanized forces were in Libya and gave his answer to Graziani by listing the number of tanks, trucks, motorcycles, and guns he had sent to North Africa.

Three days later the Germans went into action against the British and eventually pushed them back to the Egyptian frontier.

A new commander had taken charge in Libya. He was Colonel-General Erwin Rommel, who had escaped from an Italian prison camp in World War I. Graziani resigned and General Italo Gariboldi, no kin of the great patriot in the unification of Italy, Giuseppe Garibaldi, took his place as the second in command in the desert area.

Graziani, who was called "the White Devil" for his ruthless pacification of Libya, may not have resented the German invasion of Italy and the enforced submission to Rommel so

very much, for Graziani, although only 57 years old, was an ill man. He was often in Rome and in Capri, suffering, we heard, from a cancer of the throat. General Roatta was made chief of staff, and his aide in SIM, General Francesco Rossi, became his assistant in the new assignment.

The military defeat in Libya was especially painful to Mussolini. He was to blame, however, and so was Graziani. The Italians had left desert areas between the towns unguarded. They had failed to defend their lines of communication. One camp was incapable of aiding another. They fought as isolated units, instead of moving as a united army. The troops were frequently found in trenches so deep they could not look out to see the enemy coming, whereas the British employed shallow slit trenches. Rommel quickly corrected all that.

The propaganda ministry told us, with reason, that the Italian soldier was wonderful, putting up with any hardship, always cheerful. The ministry officials said contemptuously that the Anglo-Saxons could not endure hardships like the Italians. They had to have electric refrigerators, shower baths, and whisky and soda in their tanks.

It was true that the Italian peasant in Libya got along with less than a quart of water a day, and sometimes no food, that the native troops subsisted on a potful of tea. But when Wavell struck with surprise, overwhelming rapidity, and a reckless disregard of the rules of warfare, the Italian officers were no match for him. He adopted the technique used by the Germans in the Lowlands and France, running his mechanized columns through the enemy and counting for safety on the confusion and destruction of communications. It was the kind of thing that Rommel had done in France and which he did against the British in Libya, after the Germans took command.

Graziani never trained his men in the British tactics, which were those of the Germans, although he must have

known that the Germans always trained their men for a given terrain and a given foe. The men they sent to Libya, for example, were a special *Afrika Corps*, put through the rigors of an artificial desert climate before they went to their new battlefield.

About the low morale of his troops, however, Graziani could have done nothing. That was Mussolini's responsibility. Graziani knew, as did Badoglio, that the Italians were weary from Ethiopia and Spain, that they detested the Germans, that Mussolini had pushed them into a war they had no will to fight. Mussolini disregarded the morale of his troops as he did the advice of his generals.

Graziani asked for the fleet's support, but Mussolini kept the fleet in home ports, while the really fine Italian naval officers chafed, because fuel oil was scarce and the Duce wanted to keep his navy intact for bargaining with Hitler after the war. Personal or political considerations, not military requirements, inspired Mussolini's orders. Eventually, the Reichsmarine placed German gunners and navigators aboard the Italian warships and ordered them out when Rommel needed the fleet's co-operation.

In East Africa there was little that Mussolini or the viceroy and commander, the Duke of Aosta, could do. That new Empire was cut off from the mother country and had to shift for itself.

In January the British started a native revolt in Ethiopia and supported it with Imperial troops until they were able, not only to regain British Somaliland, but also to wrest Italian Somaliland, Eritrea, and Ethiopia—in other words, the whole East African Empire—from the Italians. The blood and sweat the Italians shed for their Empire, the taxes they paid, the glory that Mussolini had given them for five years, the reason for the sanctions that had been used to put them into World War II, were wiped out. It was as brief as that.

In East Africa the Italian peasant again fought bravely,

wrapping his feet in the bark of trees when his shoes gave out, boiling the grass about him when there was no other food. But his heart was not in it and his thoughts were at home.

All this, of course, failed to impress Mussolini. He still considers himself the Defender of Islam. His armies may be defeated, but he has his instruments of propaganda. One of them is the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, archfoe of the British in the Middle East. Now it can be told how the Grand Mufti escaped the British to become an Axis propagandist among the Arabs.

There is no doubt in the minds of many that Greece's six months of resistance against the Italians and its further seven weeks of stubborn fighting against the Germans was a serious blow for the Axis. It prevented Hitler from launching an all-out attack on Egypt and the Middle East at a time when the British and Imperial forces were not fully prepared to receive it. It also held up Hitler's plans for the invasion of Russia, which he could not attempt with the rear of his armies exposed.

But more immediately it caused the British to occupy Syria, Iran, and Iraq. And there is where the Mufti comes in.

For several years the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin el Hussein, leader of the Palestine Moslems, had been in hiding from the British, with a price on his head. First they tried to arrest him in Palestine, but he escaped to Syria. When they closed in on him in Syria he got away to Iraq. With the British occupation of Iraq the Mufti fled to Iran.

When the British took over Iran they forced the Teheran government to break off diplomatic relations with Germany and Italy. They also started looking for the Grand Mufti, whom the Italians, it seems, were sheltering.

Two trustworthy friends, one of them a Fascist Arab, told me the Mufti cut off his beard. The Italian legation issued a passport to him, bearing the picture of his newly shaven face and an Italian name. They packed his robes and provided him

with a European suit of clothes. Then they took him with them in the evacuation of the diplomatic mission.

British officials who checked the credentials of the departing party were told that this Arabic gentleman with blue eyes was a native of Tunisia, with part Italian blood and Italian citizenship. They had to make it Tunisia because the Mufti spoke no Italian, but he could make himself understood in French. The unsuspecting British, to whom such a violation of diplomatic practice would not have been cricket, let the Mufti through to Turkey, whence he reached Albania and flew by plane across the Adriatic to Italy.

Mussolini considered the Grand Mufti a valuable propagandist in his aspiration to wrest control of the Arab world from the British. He used him and the one-time rebel chief and former premier of Iraq, Rashid Ali el-Kailani, to broadcast revolutionary propaganda to the Arabs from the radio station at Bari, transmitter of Axis propaganda in the Arabic tongue.

As is usual in the Axis partnership, the Grand Mufti, while a guest of the Italians, got his instructions from Berlin, which he and his Iraqi pal visited as soon as the Mufti's beard had regrown to its former dignity.

Mussolini could strike a balance sheet of Italy's more than five years of war in the spring and find the losses tremendous, the liabilities heavy, and the assets doubtful. As John Whitaker expressed it:

"Unlike the Germans, Italy had never been able to make conquest pay. Hitler acquired Austrian iron, Czech lignite, Rumanian oil, foodstuff, raw materials, equipment, and rolling stock looted from Norway, the Lowlands, and France. Mussolini has been a collector of deserts and headaches."

More specifically, Mussolini collected deficits from his Ethiopian adventure. Before British Imperial troops snatched away the prize the Italian finance minister, Count Thaon di Revel, estimated that Italy spent 45,000,000,000 lire on that

dud—$2,250,000,000, or the equivalent of two annual budgets for the normal operations of the Italian government. The Italians left in British hands the roads that cost $163,000,000 and much of the $450,000,000 invested in private firms, bus lines, airports, and harbor facilities.

For the Italians there was no return on the investment. The propaganda myth of the mineral resources failed to materialize. The trade figures show that nothing of appreciable worth, neither gold, nickel, platinum, copper, nor petroleum, went to the motherland. Neither did the Italians obtain the coffee, cotton, lumber, wheat, livestock, and hides, by which they set such store.

Ethiopia was to give the surplus Italian population "living space." Only a few hundred families of colonists were sent there.

Equally costly was the invasion of Spain to help Franco defeat republicanism and democracy. In February, Mussolini's bill to Franco showed that Italy spent 7,500,000,000 lire on planes, armaments, and material alone. The Duce wrote off 2,000,000,000 lire for good will and asked the Caudillo to pay only 5,500,000,000 lire. With nothing but destruction and poverty to show for the Italian intervention Franco agreed to pay the $275,000,000 in twenty-four annual installments. It is doubtful if Italy will ever collect all of those.

The cost of transporting, feeding, and paying the so-called volunteers is a total loss. The trade return on the investment was almost nil, because of German competition, Italy's failure to obtain control of the mines, and the outbreak of the war that brought the British blockade. The only good will Mussolini got was the empty window dressing of a meeting with Franco on the Italian Riviera.

The conquest of Albania cost Italy a mere $5,000,000, but the economic development of the country would entail a much larger expenditure before it could begin to pay dividends. So far as the principal resource, petroleum, is con-

cerned, Italy already controlled the output and could have expanded it to the present 125,000 tons a year, one-tenth of Italy's normal needs, without the cost of conquest and the expense of maintaining the troops necessary to hold the population from revolt.

Whatever the invasion of the French frontier cost there has been no return on the investment. Hitler has looted all the French foodstuffs and war material. He has allowed Mussolini only a small amount of the French raw materials, such as iron, to produce weapons and machinery for the Nazi war effort.

The cost of the conquest of Greece must be charged off as part of the $3,000,000,000 that Italy shot away in the first year of war. So, too, must be written off the cost of occupying Dalmatia, Montenegro, Slovenia, and Croatia. How much return Italy could obtain in the products of those regions depends on how much Hitler left to the Italians. In the case of Greece the Germans seized everything and that ruined, starving country has nothing more to offer.

XX

In German Hands

Italy's defeat at the hands of Greece, Great Britain, and Fascism brought the recurrent dread of centuries, the German invasion of Italy. It was all the more insidious because it was carried out by a horde of Nazi officials, secret police, and soldiers who came in the guise of allies bringing gifts, the gifts of German efficiency, German militarism, and German industry.

One of the first contingents to come were agents of the Gestapo, ostensibly for training in the Fascist colonial police school at Tivoli, although the Germans could, and did, teach the Italians more than there was to learn in Rome. Other missions came, political, economic, military, until, within a few quick weeks, Hitler was the master of Italy and Mussolini was little more than the gauleiter of a conquered province.

Gradually the Nazis assumed control of the armed forces, the internal administration, much of Italian industry and agriculture, the Fascist regime itself. They did not take over openly. The Duce remained in his Palazzo Venezia and gave the orders. But in many instances the orders were suggested to him by Hitler through his ambassador, Georg von Mackensen. So-called German liaison officers were installed in the Foreign Office, the Ministries of Agriculture, Corporations, Finance, Communications, Trade, and Foreign Exchange. The German embassy expanded with bustling activity until it nearly burst its walls. Doctor Mollier, the press chief, enlarged his staff until it included three officials with the diplomatic rank of counsellor of embassy. One of them was Leithe-Jasper,

a personal henchman of Ribbentrop. Mollier himself went to the Ministry of Popular Culture every morning, parked his car, and took upstairs to Pavolini the propaganda instructions from Berlin which were to be the pattern for the government's instructions to the Italian press.

The once fashionable Hotel de Russie, known to thousands of tourists, was "closed for demolition." The German high command's staff for Italy moved into it and established headquarters. Drab staff cars of gunmetal gray stood in the spacious Piazza del Popolo. From this hotel the instructions went out to the Ministries of War, Marine, and Air, as well as to the various German units that occupied Italian soil. The chief of the German military mission in Italy was Lieutenant General Enno von Rintelen, long the military attaché at the German embassy and a brother of the saboteur in the first World War who worked with von Papen in the United States. But the staff work was done by officers sent directly from Berlin. This, again, I had from German correspondents.

Gestapo chief for Italy was the mild-mannered, but efficient Eugen Dollman, whose office, it seems, was in the Brown House, the Nazi party headquarters among the rambling studio buildings of Rome's art quarter, the Via Margutta.

Italian agriculture was left in the hands of the peasants, but when the Fascists asked Clodius to take less food from Italy he arranged for the introduction of the German rationing system in Italy and provided the pattern for the Fascist machinery to control it. So successful was it, from the Nazi point of view, that German correspondents returning to Rome from a vacation in the Fatherland reported that the German rations were more ample than the Italian.

Italian industry, much of it at least, fell under German control in one way or another.

When the British blockade and Italy's entrance in the war cut off the Italian sources of raw materials, Italian foodstuffs became the price of materials from Germany. But the Ger-

mans also exacted control of the industries themselves, in the familiar manner practiced by the Nazis in other countries. They placed German technicians in managerial positions in the factories using German raw materials, and arranged to buy stock in some. The annual report for 1941 of the great Fiat motor works at Turin, employing 74,000 men, mentioned agreements concluded by the company for a "constantly closer technical collaboration with Germany."

Another form of German exploitation was the mass shipment of some 300,000 Italian workers to Germany. Germany had to import more and more foreign labor each year. It assigned a quota not only to the conquered countries, but also one for the ally Italy to fill. In fact, at the end of September, 1941, Germany was using 271,667 Italian workers, a number exceeded only by the million taken from conquered Poland. The Nazis exploited Italy like any other occupied country.

This had the effect of intensifying Italy's own labor shortage, especially of the skilled workers, already critical because Italy was holding two million, perhaps three million, men under arms. The labor shortage, with the incurable deficiency in raw materials, was a severe drag on industrial production.

Everywhere in Italy the Germans acted with considerable tact toward the Italians they directed. While no decision affecting the war effort could be made without their approval, they usually offered their voluntary suggestions with the explanation, "In Berlin, we do it this way." Italian officials swallowed the doses of Nazi direction with the best grace possible, even at the Foreign Ministry where the Germans, especially Ribbentrop, were supposed to detest Ciano. I asked a German diplomat if this were true. His answer was merely a curt, "We get along all right."

Before Christmas of 1940 the Germans remained inconspicuously in their favorite role of tourists and Italians were little aware of them, although they filled the Eden and Vic-

toria hotels. Almost overnight the guests of these hotels became officials. A third hotel, the Ambassador, once the stopping place for Americans, was reserved for the countless German missions that came to Rome.

Dollman's organization was already established in Italy before the chief appeared on the scene. Before Italy entered the war there were German tourists in Italy who were Gestapo agents. For instance, in January, 1940, I was helping the wife of a Czech colleague obtain a visa to go to London. Since she spoke nothing but her native tongue she brought with her always a young Czechoslovakian Jew who was studying medicine in Rome. One day she appeared with another interpreter and the information that the young Jew had left for France. He had obtained a visa some weeks earlier, but his departure was hastened by a visit from a German agent who told him he must either leave Italy or the Gestapo would ask for his deportation to Germany, where he would go to a concentration camp.

After the Gestapo activities in Italy became official they were directed first against refugees from Germany or Nazi-dominated countries, next against other foreigners, and finally against the Italians themselves. The German agents did not themselves make arrests, but assigned that task to the Italian police. The Italian authorities could hardly refuse the request of the Germans for the expulsion of an undesirable foreigner. The Italians who ran afoul of the Gestapo were those known to be anti-Nazi, those who made the mistake of criticizing the Germans where they could be overheard, and some who associated with foreigners considered hostile toward the Nazi regime.

Toward Mussolini, Hitler had always shown cordial friendship and consideration, according to all the reports in Rome. This tactful treatment of the Duce also was the policy of Mackensen.

Italy's defeat, with the country ripe for a separate peace,

forced Hitler to take over, whether he wished or not. As for Mussolini, the popular reaction to the country's plight was such that he could remain in power only through the favor and support of the Nazis.

Italy's position in North Africa and the Mediterranean had become desperate. Only Mussolini could prevent a separate peace. Only the Germans could rescue the Italians from the military disaster in which they found themselves and maintain Mussolini in power.

The Germans, therefore, took control of the Italian railroad system, imported German military station agents, who openly posted German signs in Gothic lettering on their doors, and suspended 122 major train services. For weeks the trains were devoted to the hauling of German troops and equipment into Italy.

Panzer divisions rolled through on their way to Libya, with stopovers in Sicily, which became a German island. Planes, fliers, ground crews, submarine crews, naval gunners and navigators began to appear in their uniforms in the streets, snapping photographs of the Roman monuments before proceeding to their new assignments. Within a year it was estimated that 250,000 men of the German armed forces were scattered through Italy "in transit" or "in special training," with replacements or reinforcements coming daily. I know of at least one flying field on the Italian mainland, the one near Tivoli, that was taken over entirely by the Germans.

Wherever the Nazis pass they strip the country like a swarm of locusts—and Italy was no exception.

The Germans, provided with lire purchased abroad at black market rates, stripped the Italian stores of whatever they could find from shoes to diamonds. They outbought even the Italians who raced madly to put their money into property, from trinkets to real estate, before inflation wiped out its value.

I saw German soldiers buying up armfuls of cheap silk

stockings. Not only did the hundreds of new German residents in Rome buy large quantities of the articles that no longer existed in Germany, but Nazi diplomats in the Wilhelmstrasse vied for the privilege of carrying the weekly diplomatic pouch to Rome so that they might shop for their wives and themselves. The wealthier Germans bought the most expensive luxuries with a reckless disregard of the price.

Goering sent an agent who combed the museums and homes of Italy for priceless paintings and tapestries, on which he spent millions of lire. I saw the agent's business card, identifying him as the representative of the Nazi air marshal. I knew an Italian multimillionaire, with a palace full of art, who refused an offer of two million lire for a painting, although its value was less than that, partly because the rich man did not need the money and partly because he disliked the Germans.

This Nazi buying spree must have been apparent to the Fascist authorities, but they did not appreciate the full extent of it until the annual international cinema festival at Venice in August, 1941.

Hitler's propaganda minister, Goebbels, arrived in person at the head of a large German delegation. They flew down in a fleet of airplanes, one of which was loaded with trunks, ostensibly containing the white Nazi summer uniforms and other apparel of the party.

The Germans were wined and dined with champagne and caviar on the yacht of the banker of Venice, Count Volpi. It was customary in Italy for the government to pay all the expenses of official guests. One of Goebbel's party went to a shoe store and ordered a half-dozen pairs of shoes delivered to his hotel. When the shoes arrived the guest told the clerk who brought them to charge them to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The clerk consulted his employer, who communicated with the authorities, and was informed that since shoes were hardly a form of entertainment the govern-

ment did not feel obligated to pay for them. The result was that the German had to pay for the shoes.

On the return trip to Germany it so happened that the plane transporting the trunks crashed on Italian soil. In the wreckage the Italian authorities found a smashed trunk that was spilling diamonds, rubies, emeralds, gold jewelry, and silk stockings. They inspected the other trunks and found them filled with new Italian merchandise.

The Italian authorities had confirmed what every customer in Rome knew, that the German official missions had been despoiling the country for months. Like the Italians they were even buying up automobiles from owners who no longer had permits to drive them, as an investment, for sale or use after the war.

When Mussolini heard of it he said, "Basta!" The Duce issued a series of decrees, prohibiting the further sale of jewels, gold, silver, and other precious metals, as well as their exportation; prohibiting the exportation of motor cars, and permitting the sale of a large group of articles of general demand only to persons presenting Italian identity cards. The government announced the decrees as anti-inflationary measures, and they were, but they also had the equally essential purpose of stopping the German stripping of the country.

Kay went into a shop with an Italian friend, who bought a piece of costume jewelry by presenting her identity card. Kay saw something she wanted and asked the salesgirl for it.

"Have you an identity card, signora?" the girl asked.

"No," said Kay.

"Then I am sorry, but I can't sell it to you. You are English, aren't you?"

"No," said Kay, "I'm an American. Why?"

"I hope you won't be offended," the girl replied. "I just wanted you to know this regulation is not against you, but against the Germans."

More important than the German buying flurry in its

depleting effect on Italian articles of necessity was the continuously greater flow of foodstuffs to Germany through the regular trade channels. Italy's food products, along with its sulphur, mercury, and silk, were the principal means of payment for the indispensable supplies of coal, steel, machinery, and munitions supplied by Germany.

Before the year was over Italy was suffering from an acute food shortage. That it should manifest itself in such abundantly produced articles as oranges, lemons, almonds, walnuts, dried fruits, vegetables, or even in cheese and tobacco, lay in the shipments to Germany.

The subject was a sensitive one among Italian officials, who attempted to minimize the importance of the outflow. The *Agenzia Economica Finanzieria,* a financial reporting service, under government control like all information services, said:

> Comparing Italian exportation to Germany in 1941 with that in 1940, it is seen that, of the total Italian production, Germany received the following quantities: one-fifth of the production of citrus fruits and of cauliflowers; one-tenth of the production of almonds, cherries, pears, and onions; one-eighth of the production of peaches, prunes, and apricots; one-eleventh of the production of tobacco.
>
> These data attest to the falsity of enemy propaganda, which would make it appear that a scarcity of food products in Italy is due to exportations to Germany.

An economist, who pointed out the item to me, said, "'Enemy propaganda' could hardly be more outspoken in charging Germany with Italy's shortage in important goods than the Italian public."

When Mussolini destroyed all that he had accomplished in nineteen years by his declaration of war and his blunders that defeated Italy's armed forces, he destroyed Italian morale.

It rose again slightly among some of the people, who accepted the Nazi-inspired propaganda, and fluctuated faintly, but the thoughtful Italians never completely recovered their morale, for they knew that Italy was beaten. They were the ones who said, "If we lose the war, we'll simply be losers; if we win, that is, if Germany wins, we'll be lost."

The Fascists objected sharply if anyone suggested that the spirits of Italians are subject to sudden ups and downs, that the people who inhabit the peninsula are a volatile race with strong emotions, subject to wide fluctuations between the extremes of joy and depression. They would have the world believe that the Italians are all lions, in the image of Mussolini, with steel in their hearts, with his tenacity and firmness of will. Yet to me it seemed that the Italians were a mercurial race and I thought I could see the rise and fall of their feelings as in a graph.

At the outset of the war for Italy the average man's emotions were mixed. He did not want to fight, but if it was going to be over soon perhaps Italy would gain greater glory at the expense of the French and British Empires. He was ashamed, however, that Mussolini had stabbed France in the back.

In Rome the first air-raid alarms frightened the people; then as no bombs were dropped they became indifferent to the sirens and did not always go down into the shelters. Every time British planes raided Naples the alarm would sound in Rome, nothing would happen, and the grumbling Romans went back to bed. Soon it was like the cry of "Wolf, Wolf!" and we shuddered to think what would happen to the sleeping populace if Rome ever was bombed. The press ministry was ashamed of this performance and rarely would let us report one of the score or more alarms in the first eighteen months of war.

In the first July, when the German bombing raids on Britain began, the Italians thought that would knock England out of the war. Mussolini sent several plane loads of token

land and parachute troops to the Channel for the invasion of England. He wanted them to be on hand when the Germans stepped on the soil where Caesar's legions landed almost two thousand years ago.

Gayda said that preparations for a vast Axis assault on Britain would be completed in a few days. Then, as the British began their epic of resistance, he reversed himself and said slow wearing-down attacks would be necessary. The Italian people were surprised and disappointed. To explain the failure of the Germans to finish off the British they were told of the strong English resistance.

By September the Italians began to suspect that the war might go on until 1941. Many still believed, however, that the bombing of London was the last phase of the conflict and that peace would come before snow coated the foothills of the Apennines. Bets were placed by the lesser Fascist journalists that a German army of occupation would be in London by November 1. But Gayda and the others sounded repeated notes of warning.

Defeatism then sprouted for the first time, taking root among the intelligent and educated Italians, who had some knowledge of the might of the British Empire, the bulldog qualities of the British, and the sympathies of the Americans. The anti-Fascists were defeatists from the start, of course, and some Italians who may not have been anti-Fascists were suspected of it.

In November, when the Greeks withstood the Italian attack, failed to surrender within a few days, and reversed the invasion of their country, the Italian morale dropped to the gloomy depths of depression. It was pounded flatter by one blow after another.

British planes sank a battleship in a daring raid on the naval base at Taranto, and put three other battleships out of commission. Within six weeks the government announced that two spies had been shot, three sentenced to life imprisonment,

and nineteen others to short prison terms. They included two warrant officers in the navy and all were in the same network of agents supplying the British with information.

The disclosure that twenty-four Italians in a single band had served the British as spies and made possible the single blow that put two-thirds of Italy's capital ships out of action failed to shock the country. It only proved that there were many Italians with sympathies for the British. It implied that Italy probably was honeycombed with British agents. There must have been a considerable number of them.

The gloom over the ability of weak little Greece to beat off the Italians was so intense that Mussolini was constrained to make the speech in which he said that he would break the back of Greece if it took a year. Through his party organization the Duce had heard of the popular despair. In his speech he urged the provincial leaders to intensify their work among the people, prepare them for greater hardships and privations, suppress all defeatist talk, and have confidence in final victory.

Then Mussolini struck a blow at the morale he was trying to bolster, by his dismissal of Badoglio. The marshal was the object of great public confidence, which the people could not transfer overnight to Cavallero.

Conditions became so bad that Serena called in the commanders of the party's old-time fighting squads in Rome and told them to get busy with armchair strategists, murmurers, and defeatists. The squadristi had been inactive for a long time, resting on the laurels of their former cudgeling expeditions. Over the years the strong arm of Fascism had relaxed. Now the squads became active again and one heard that castor oil and the fist were back in play.

The rapidly deteriorating standard of living, the shortage of fuel and food that began to be noticeable, brought an undercurrent of unrest, especially in the industrial north. Serena announced a winter "battle on the internal front," the

first admission that such a front existed. He called for intensified aid for the needy. He asked the Fascist women to visit the military hospitals full of frostbitten cripples and the families of the fighting men who were suffering in the mountains of Albania, or captured in Africa. He instructed the Fascist officials to watch over the supplies of essentials, the rationing, and prices. There again Fascism was a failure.

As I went to the office of a morning I saw lines of servant girls and humble housewives, stretching from the doorways of food stores, milk depots, and charcoal dealers. As I returned home in the gloom of the early winter night, intensified by the blackout, the lines were still there. Our own maid would stand in line for two hours in the morning, only to be told that the milk supply was exhausted before she reached the counter. She would return in the afternoon, and unless she went early the fresh supply of milk would give out before she was served.

It was even harder on the poor wives of the workers. One I knew who worked to eke out her husband's meager wages stayed away from her job and stood in line all day for three days to buy charcoal with which to cook dinner for her husband and their four children. Every day the little charcoal supply would give out before she and many other women could buy their allotment of 2.2 pounds. Near the end of the third day the patience of the women was exhausted. They had been grumbling. Suddenly a woman screamed that her family had eaten only cold food for two days and they ought to march to the Piazza Venezia, instead of standing outside the charcoal merchants. Every line was watched by a uniformed policeman and the one in charge of this one strode up to the woman with a warning that she mind her tongue. Immediately every woman in the line assailed him like a band of Furies, shrieked, and pummeled him until he retreated in disorder. Nothing happened to the women, for the popolane, the women of the people, are a dangerous force. Instead, Musso-

lini tried to correct the Fascist distribution system, which was mainly at fault.

Such incidents were magnified abroad into riots. They were bad enough, as it was.

In few countries do rumors spread as rapidly as in Fascist Italy, where true news had been so long suppressed. One morning, in the midst of the Italian defeat in Libya, a rumor spread of a big Italian victory, with the capture of 170,000 British troops. In no time at all, everybody was excited about it, asking one another for confirmation. Italians swamped the newspaper offices with telephone calls, and several even picked our number at random from the press section of the telephone directory, to ask about it. By noon the official radio finally had to broadcast a warning to the public against such rumors, which it said were a subtle means of British agents to raise Italian enthusiasm only to dash it deeper.

Into such an atmosphere Churchill on December 23 broadcast his appeal to the Italian people to rise against Mussolini. They were suffering, he said, "all because of one man" who, "against the Crown and royal family of Italy, against the pope and all the authority of the Vatican and of the Roman Catholic Church, against the wishes of the Italian people, who had no lust for this war, has arrayed the trustees and inheritors of ancient Rome upon the side of the ferocious pagan barbarians."

"Surely the time has come," he said, "when the Italian monarchy and the people who guard the sacred center of Christendom should have a word to say. Surely the Italian army . . . should take some care of the life and future of Italy."

It was masterful rhetoric, but a complete fiasco. The king was impotent before Mussolini, who sent him a Christmas message to issue to the armed forces that "no obstacle can halt the rise of Italy." Mussolini arranged for the crown princess, Marie José, the most popular member of the royal

family, to announce that she had joined the Fascist party. The army, by tradition, was loyal to the king. The people, by long tyranny, were cowed, without leadership, powerless against the Fascist fighting squads. Furthermore, the Germans had already invaded Italy.

Mussolini did send a half-dozen of his cabinet ministers to the front, as a demonstration for his grumbling people—just as the German liaison officers began to move into the ministries. He set up Giuseppe Tassinari, minister of agriculture, as a dictator of the dinner table with absolute control over the appeasement of the national appetite; ordered him to take a census of the food supplies, do the purchasing of them, assign a share to the armed forces, supervise the farmers and industrialists to see they produced enough food for the populace. He set up Renato Ricci, the minister of corporations, as a dictator over all industry and the distribution and consumption of its products. Fascist bureaucrats both, they did little to improve the situation.

The repression of outspoken defeatism progressed and almost anything could be construed as defeatism, including the purchase of Swiss newspapers containing British and Greek war communiqués.

As more and more foods were rationed after the spaghetti that formed the bulk of the Italian diet, as all pastry disappeared, after olive oil was rationed, the Italians knew at last what Mussolini's war was to cost them in sacrifice. A frugal people, by force of poverty, who had tightened their belts so many times, the Italians winced when they read posters that said, "Eat to live—Don't live to eat."

We heard no expressions of popular indignation when the British made their first commando raid on Italy, dropping parachute troops who dynamited a bridge and a waterworks in the provinces of Calabria and Lucania, in the arch and toe of Italy's geographical boot. Nineteen parachutists were captured. One, of Italian origin, was shot as a traitor. The

other eighteen were interned in a prison camp, from which two escaped to Switzerland. One of the eighteen told that he had induced a Calabrian peasant to carry his box of dynamite. The peasant had never seen a German and thought the soldier in the strange uniform must be one.

British planes, guided by the beacon of Vesuvius' glowing crater that Nature refused to black out, took to bombing Naples, the port from which the Italians shipped their supplies to Libya. That shook the Neapolitans' morale at first, but they soon recovered because they learned the British bombardiers were good marksmen and usually dropped their bombs on military objectives in the harbor.

The Fascists were indignant at the suggestion that the Southern Italians were an impressionable people, yet Mussolini sent the king, once to Sicily, once to the Naples area, to inspirit the populace in the bombed zones. I asked a Neapolitan whom I had known a long time whether they were impressionable in air raids. "Let us say that we are timid," he said, with a wink.

The German invasion had a further demoralizing effect on the Italians. Many foresaw the end to the Greek campaign and were glad of that. But when the true nature of the alliance was brought home to the man in the street he was not so happy.

Italians ground their teeth in impotent rage as they saw the German generals and colonels riding about in staff cars; or when they were jostled by German civilians in the buses, and found all the tables of their favorite restaurants preempted by the Nazis.

There was no fraternizing, at least in Rome, between the Italian and the German officers and men. On the contrary, the Italians avoided their allies as much as possible.

An officer I know was in Rome on leave from Libya, where he had just undergone a British offensive. He went to a restaurant and had to sit, without anyone serving him, while

all the waiters bustled about the Germans, even serving them free wine. Finally the proprietor noticed the impatient officer, whom he knew as an old customer, and hurried over.

"Excellency," the proprietor said, "you seem to be in ill humor. What is wrong?"

"Come into the cloakroom and I will tell you," said the officer. He took the restaurant man into the cloakroom and told him that he was disgusted to see the waiters fawning over the Germans.

"If we have nothing else," the officer said, "let us at least keep our pride."

"But, Excellency," said the proprietor, "without tourists we must be nice to the Germans or we won't be able to eat."

"Then be a true Italian and starve," snapped the officer. And he walked out.

An Italian captain waited several days in Rome for a place in an Italian plane to take him back to his regiment in Libya. Others had priorities ahead of him and a German officer offered the Italian a seat in a German plane. "No, thanks," said the captain, rudely, "if I die, I want to die with friends, not enemies." Only because of his front-line record as a soldier could the captain say that with impunity.

The Germans, on their part, had the Ministry of Popular Culture put out propaganda skillfully designed to appeal to the Italian sensibilities. It ran to the effect that the Italians had fought the Axis war for Germany all winter, from the mountains of Albania to the deserts of Africa and the plateau of Ethiopia. Italian submarines were sinking British shipping in the Atlantic, Italian planes were fighting British convoys in the Mediterranean. The Germans had rested all winter. Now it was only fair that they help the Italians.

"Co-operation between the two allies is all-embracing," Gayda wrote. "Just as we sent planes to the Channel to help the Germans, so they send them now to Libya to help us. Just as we send workers to Germany, so they send soldiers here."

The arguments had a certain effect because Italy was humiliated by its defeat and wanted somebody to rescue it.

After the end of the war with Greece, after the Germans drove the British back to the Egyptian frontier, because so many British troops had been sent to aid the Greeks, the Italians lapsed into a coma of disillusionment, defeatism, and despair. They no longer cared.

The cynics continued to make their jokes. After the fall of France they had asked, "What is the difference between Italy in the First World War and in the present one?" The answer was: "In the first war, we prepared, then we fought, and then we made the armistice. In this one, we made the armistice, then we fought, and now we must prepare." In the midst of the Greek campaign they told the story that the French had put signs in the Alps, saying, "Greeks! Stop here! This is the French frontier." Now they told of the German soldier who came to Italy and asked an Italian, "What! You have no tanks, no planes, no guns? What do you have?" The Italian replied slyly, "We have an ally."

The Italians withdrew from the war effort as much as they could, until every store and restaurant was obliged to display a tricolored placard which bore only the words, "Siamo in Guerra" (We are in war).

In May the university students, all of whom were called to arms as of June 1, rebelled in Rome and forced the closing of the university for three days in a vast plot, the ringleaders of which were imprisoned. When the government called for volunteers so few responded that Farinacci in July recommended a reform in the mobilization regulations that would take young Italians off the streets.

In October, Mussolini made a pep tour of Bologna and the surrounding factory towns, exhorting the workers to "hold fast." Social unrest had reached such disturbing proportions that Mussolini's Fascist underlings could no longer hide it from him. The Duce went to Bologna, the former hotbed of Socialism, to show himself to the workers and charm them

into renewed loyalty with his dynamic, theatrical personality. He intended going to Milan for the same purpose.

The Bologna pep tour was a flop. Mussolini never went to Milan. Persons who witnessed the fiasco reported the crowds apathetic, if not openly hostile, toward the man who had plunged them into the war with its body-pinching sacrifices for an impoverished people.

"How about food for our babies?" women asked the dictator. Unable to answer their demand he was called back to Rome for "important affairs of state."

Mussolini had given Italy a tremendous prestige before the war and every Italian gained more of a national consciousness from it. Within one year Mussolini wiped all that prestige away. With it vanished the adoration he once received.

Could Mussolini have kept Italy out of the war, he could have retained a large degree of popularity at home and his prestige abroad. Had his horse thrown him and broken his neck before June 10, 1940, history would have recalled his many accomplishments, the patriotism and discipline he evoked among the Italian people, the coolness with which he played power politics. His inconsistencies, the unsoundness of his opportunism, the violence of his rise to power, and the oppression of his regime would have been glossed over.

By putting the party first Mussolini disclosed the true nature of Fascism and a whole nation lost its will to fight. In privacy Italians reviled him, or they laughed at him, which was worse, and spread nasty stories of his private life.

An Italian journalist said to me, "Mussolini in the spring of 1940 was no longer interested in fighting diplomatic battles for the true grandeur of Italy; he only thought of fornicating." That was untrue. It was not Mussolini's lust of the flesh that got Italy into the war.

The war that crumbled his achievements was the outcome of the revolution that he started in his country twenty years ago, a revolution that spread out of his control into the hands

of Hitler. Hitler was his pupil, too good a pupil. He became so much more expert in the use of man power and extortion that he made a follower of the master and eventually a subordinate.

Mussolini, who would have liked to be the twentieth-century Napoleon, had to relinquish that ambition to Hitler.

Although the Duce assumed the supreme command of the Italian armed forces, no brilliant stroke of military strategy, no successful campaign, no victory of arms has crowned his war effort.

History will record Mussolini as a dictator who started strong but finished as an also-ran, a genius consumed by his own lust for power.

XXI

The Reluctant King

The morning of May 18 the King of Italy got out of bed, went to the window of his chamber in the Villa Savoia, glanced into the expansive park, and saw that it was a rainy Sunday. It was the sort of day when he might lounge about the house in a tweed suit and perhaps work on the catalogue of his coin collection, for the king, as everybody knew, had one of the finest collections of coins in the world. It was his great hobby.

But this was no Sunday for puttering in his counting room, counting out his old money. Today the king had to collect, not another coin, but a crown for the constellation that Benito Mussolini, the one-time peasant schoolteacher-Socialist, intended to control. It was the crown of Croatia.

Antiquarians in the Italian Foreign Ministry had dug up in the more obscure pages of history the record that Croatia a thousand years ago had its own kings. The last one was a certain Zvonimir, who died in 1089. After a brief period of anarchy in Croatia the Hungarian kings usurped the throne of Zvonimir and the country was incorporated in the Austro-Hungarian Empire until, in 1918, the Croats declared their independence and the incorporation into Yugoslavia eventually followed.

Now the new Fascist regime of the Ustachi in Zagreb had restored the throne and the crown. Today Vittorio Emanuele III was to designate a kinsman of his House of Savoy to occupy the throne and wear the crown.

The little, 72-year-old king, who stood five-feet-three in

his slippers, rang for his valet to bring him his high-heeled shoes and his uniform of field marshal. As was his habit since his mother, Queen Margherita, put him under the spartan training of an inflexible martinet of a cavalry officer when he was a boy, he dressed himself.

The king, as he drew on his shoes, may have wondered if his cousin, the Duke of Aosta, had yet surrendered the mountain peak in Ethiopia that he and his men had held for weeks against the British. The British already had snatched all the rest of Abyssinia away and left him, Vittorio Emanuele, with the empty title of Emperor. Haile Selassie was back in Addis Ababa to claim the title.

Vittorio Emanuele may have yawned at the prospect of the boring palace ceremony, for he knew already who the King of Croatia was to be. His own son, Umberto, was reserved for the throne of Italy. There were only a few cousins available and Mussolini had chosen one, the Duke of Spoleto, for the new job. The king finished his dressing, went to Mass in his private chapel, and then was taken by motor car to the Quirinale Palace.

At the other end of town, meanwhile, several thousand members of the Fascist and military organizations had been herded into the broad Piazza Adolfo Hitler, in front of the new Ostiense station. From the façades of Rome's public buildings, the newly designed checkerboard flags of the brand-new, free, and independent Croatia, made a limp display of color in the rain.

At nine-thirty, the Poglavnik, or Leader, of the new Croatia, the man who was intended to be Mussolini's sub-Duce in Zagreb, Doctor Ante Pavelich, made his triumphal entry into Rome. He stepped from a special train, accompanied by members of his new government and shepherded by high-ranking Fascists and officers of the Court of Savoy.

Mussolini, Ciano, and the hierarchy of Fascism, waiting on the platform, hailed Pavelich with salutes. Pavelich and his

party were whisked off in motor cars to the Villa Madama, the government's guesthouse, and then to the Quirinale. Except for the compulsory welcomers the Roman crowds went their way, indifferent to the show.

It was about noon when the Croats reached the palace. The king stood before his throne. Nearby stood Mussolini, Ciano, the German and Japanese ambassadors, members of the royal family, and the cabinet ministers. Mussolini and Ciano were on the king's right. Among the members of the royal family on the left were Umberto and Aimone, the Duke of Spoleto.

Pavelich, with a hard, clean-shaven, slightly pock-marked face, entered the room, attended by representatives of the Catholic and Moslem Churches of his country, and by officers of the Ustachi, whose members were described as terrorists at one time, but who now were masters of their country. There were thirty-three in the Croatian party, most of them in the new Ustachi uniform, whose brown tunic resembled that of Hitler's Nazis. Pavelich was in the uniform of colonel of the new Croatian army. There were fifteen peasants in white trousers, short red jackets, and pillbox hats like those worn by bellhops in some American hotels.

Bowing low before Vittorio Emanuele, Pavelich made a three-minute speech, in which he said the free people of his country, now that they had emerged from years of oppression and war, wished to take part in the new European order which was being worked out by the Axis powers. With this in mind the Croats had decided to offer the crown to a member of the Italian king's illustrious House and they asked him to name the man.

The king, in a three-minute reply, acknowledged the request and the reasons that inspired it. Then he named the Duke of Spoleto for the throne. The Croatians marched past the new king-designate, the priests and peasants bowing, the military clicking their heels. From the throne room the Cro-

ats marched to the great Hall of Battles, where they bowed before the Duchess of Spoleto, the former Princess Irene of Greece, whose brother, George II, had been driven away from the throne of Greece by the Germans in Mussolini's, or Ciano's, war on that country. She was to be Queen of Croatia.

From the Quirinale, Pavelich went directly to the Palazzo Venezia, where he signed a treaty with Mussolini. By its terms Fascist Italy guaranteed the independence and integrity of the Kingdom of Croatia, as it once had done for the Kingdom of Albania. Pavelich agreed to let Italy conduct Croatia's foreign policy.

The treaty outlined the frontiers between Italy and Croatia for the future. It gave Italy the islands of the Dalmatian coast and the hinterland of former Yugoslavia as far south as Montenegro, which had become a virtual Italian province. The territory on the eastern shore of the Adriatic which might be called Classic Dalmatia was annexed to Italy.

Except for some measure of local autonomy, the extent of which was yet to be determined, Croatia was to be a part of the Italian Empire. The Fascists were ready to paint the territory in white, as they had done Italy, Albania, Libya, and East Africa, on a marble map of the new Roman Empire near the Coliseum. Ethiopia, incidentally, was still on the imperial map.

Croatia guaranteed that it would maintain no navy, that it would restrict its army and air force in size and keep them within certain limits, behind demilitarized zones marked on a map that was attached to the pact.

Pavelich left for Zagreb to prepare for the coronation of Aimone, who was to take the name of Thomislav II, Croatia's first native king in the Middle Ages having been Thomislav I.

The King of Italy and Albania, Emperor of Ethiopia, returned to the Villa Savoia where, the next day, he was informed that Aimone's brother, the Duke of Aosta, Viceroy

of Ethiopia, had surrendered his troops to the British at Amba Alagi, the mountain peak 280 miles northeast of his British-occupied capital, Addis Ababa. The king was shown a message from the duke to the Duce.

"Our forces were inferior to those of the enemy in the number of men and arms," it said. "Moreover, they had no aviation and insufficient antiaircraft defenses." It was a further tacit indictment of the Fascist misadministration.

The Duke of Spoleto never went to Croatia to assume his throne. When Pavelich arrived in Zagreb he found that the Croat public, which had not been told of the offer to Italy until it was made, met him with consternation. He tried to reassure the people and they could do little about it then, because Pavelich's gunmen were in control.

Among his intimates the Duke of Spoleto made no attempt to hide the fact that he did not want the throne. He was aware that he had become only a king in an Axis chess game. He looked unhappy in the Quirinale throne room when he accepted the obeisance of the Croats. Afterward one of his closest friends told me the duke said to her, "I don't want to be King of Croatia. I don't know the language, the customs, or the people."

The duke was a widely traveled sportsman, explorer, naval officer, and airman, more than six feet tall, slender, black-haired, clean-shaven, with a long thin straight nose. A graduate of the Royal Naval Academy at Leghorn, he had attained the rank of admiral. He was 41 years old and had been the bachelor beau of Brioni, lovely island of cosmopolitan tourists in the Adriatic, until he was 39 and married Princess Irene, who then was 35.

The marriage was officially declared to be a love match, but friends said that was true only on the part of Irene, who had been fond of Aimone since they had a month's flirtation when she was a schoolgirl. Aimone had preferred American girls in his bachelorhood and courted a succession of them,

one of whom could have married him but passed up the chance.

Aimone was married to Irene to strengthen relations between Italy and Greece at a time when the Greeks were uneasy over Italy's annexation of Albania. They were married in Florence, where Irene lived with her sister, Princess Helen of Rumania, the former wife of Carol and the mother of Rumania's young King Michael.

When Serb guerrillas revived the war in Croatia the duke one day said to his valet Carlo, who had been inattentive in one of his duties, "If you don't behave, I'll send you to Croatia."

Italian control over Croatia was a concession to Mussolini from Hitler, obtained because the Duce moved as rapidly as possible to reap his reward for having sheltered Pavelich ever since the assassination of Yugoslavia's Alexander I at Marseille. Pavelich had lived with his wife and two daughters in a luxurious villa near Siena and there Mussolini went as soon as the Germans had overrun Yugoslavia. Pavelich accepted the Duce's demands as a mark of gratitude. I was told that Mussolini had first proposed to leave a much smaller Croatia to Pavelich, but the Poglavnik had gained a compromise by allowing Italy to set up a king over the land that was left him.

Glowing accounts of the natural resources of Croatia, which would accrue to Italy under economic agreements, filled the Italian press. But, as in Ethiopia, they proved to be propaganda promises, for the Germans retained the economic control and immediately set about to drain the foodstuffs and minerals produced by that peasant country.

I was told by a Japanese correspondent, so the story may be credible, that when he visited Croatia shortly after this, he found the Croats preferred the Germans to the Italians, because it was the Germans who had cut their country loose from Yugoslavia, not the Italians.

Before the summer was out the Serb guerrillas of General Draga Mikhailovich had penetrated into Croatia, and Italy had to reoccupy the demilitarized zone to end what were called disorders. The Italian press reported merciless fighting between the Serb rebels and the Axis-sponsored Croat Fascist regime, with neither side taking any prisoners.

Pavelich warned the 1,500,000 Serbs in Croatia that any who opposed him would be inexorably eliminated, but only a part of them were intimidated. Gangs in the forests continued to destroy bridges, blow up railroads, and attack the Ustachi. The Ustachi government called them Communists, but the *Popolo di Roma* said, "These are not really Communists. In Croatia there are no real Communists. There are only Serbs, who shoot at the backs of the Ustachi and fling bombs at open cars belonging to Pavelich's followers."

The Italians had to police not only Croatia, but also Dalmatia, which they had annexed to the Kingdom of Italy. Dalmatia was the particular headache of Giuseppe Bastianini, former ambassador to London and a veteran of the street-fighting days of Fascism, who was named governor of the province, with Zara as his capital.

In Slovenia, too, the Italians had to fight the Serbs, although they had annexed a slice of the territory and named it the province of Lubiana, from the Yugoslav Ljubljana, with Emilio Grazioli, another Fascist diplomat, as high commissioner.

Montenegro was intended to become another Croatia. It had a real connection with the House of Savoy, for Italy's Queen Elena had been a Montenegrin princess. Vittorio Emanuele visited the country while he was on his tour of Albania. The Italians got so far with their intention to set up a puppet government in Montenegro that they had a so-called constituent assembly meet and decide to ask the King of Italy to name a regent for the Montenegrin throne. We heard that some relative of Elena was to be designated as regent, perhaps

a cousin who had been a croupier at Monte Carlo, although an official of the press ministry said he thought the cousin had remained in France.

But the delegation of Montenegrins, supposed to ask Vittorio Emanuele for a regent as the Croats had asked for a king, never arrived in Rome. Almost before the Montenegrin assembly disbanded, the mountaineers rebelled and Serafino Mazzolini, the former Italian minister to Egypt who was the royal commissioner at Cettigne, suspended the decree that had proclaimed Montenegro to be independent.

Two Italian divisions had to maintain order in Albania, others in Montenegro, in Dalmatia, in Croatia, in Slovenia. Other Italian troops had to occupy Greece, which was too starved to rebel. In half the Balkan territory the Italian troops had occupied, the natives, especially the Serbs, were waging a counterwar. They were down, but not out.

And that is the story of Italy in the Balkans.

XXII

It's a Long Way to Russia

It is an old tradition in the Latin countries that when something is supposed to be wrong with the state of the nation, or the state of the world, the students are the first to clamor for its correction. Perhaps that is because students in the universities are of an age when perceptions are quick and ideological thought is untempered by the cynical maturity of statesmen.

In Italy the students had to curb any inclination to criticize the government under the repression of Fascism. But the Fascists kept the student tradition alive by instructing the youngsters to demonstrate against other powers which the Duce wished to impress. But like the horse led to water, you cannot always make students drink at the propaganda fount.

During the debate in the Congress at Washington on President Roosevelt's bill to lend or lease armaments to Great Britain, two hundred Grenadiers and Bersaglieri, crack troops of Italy, were stationed at advantageous points near the American embassy. A thousand schoolboys, cutting classes for the second day, marched through the streets with the German and Italian flags and approached the embassy.

Everybody at the foreign press headquarters had heard of the impending demonstration against the United States. Allen Raymond's secretary happened to encounter the crowd.

"What's the demonstration about?" she asked.

"It's against England," a student replied.

"Are you sure it's not against the United States?" the girl insisted.

"Yes," the student said, and laughed. "The Americans are our friends. Aren't you an American?"

The students, laughing and shouting, proceeded up the Via Veneto. When they reached the former palace of the late Queen Mother Margherita, adjoining the American consulate, they stopped on a plot of neatly clipped grass to rest. A Fascist guardian of the palace came out and shooed them off the grass. Thereupon the merry students disbanded and went their separate ways, in little groups, to cafés and beer dispensaries, where, in discreet undertones, they could discuss Fascism and forget the propaganda.

The Nazi propaganda machine was deliberately trying to teach the Italians to mistrust and hate the Americans. The newspapers described America as 40 per cent Jewish, Roosevelt as an unscrupulous dictator with ambitions for world conquest. Before the United States presidential election in November, Gayda said it made no difference to Italy whether Roosevelt or Wendell Willkie was elected, because United States intervention in the war was daily growing clearer. He attacked Roosevelt, Hull, Bullitt, Ickes, and Stimson for their speeches and their "warmongering policy." He said the United States was going to gobble up the British Empire, but that American factories could not produce what they had planned, and consequently America could not win the war.

The press pictured the American people as soulless money grabbers, too cowardly to fight, but opposed to the Axis out of a feeling of cultural inferiority. Appelius declared, "the American people are the most ignorant of the white race."

The propaganda had little effect, except among the more gullible of the Italians, although it played on the idea that they would already be enjoying victory and peace but for the Americans who, though unwilling to fight themselves, helped England in order to prolong the war and enrich themselves at the expense of an exhausted Europe.

Japanese pressure on Mussolini may also have been behind

the propaganda. But the Japanese in Rome, consisting only of the diplomatic mission and the correspondents, cut a much smaller figure than the Germans.

In August, 1939, the then Japanese ambassadors to Berlin and Rome, General Hiroshi Oshima and Toshio Shiratori, had met at Cernobbio, on Lake Como, and drafted a proposal to their government that Japan join the Italian-German military alliance which Ciano and Ribbentrop had arranged in the same hotel in May.

Tokyo held off to see what happened in Europe and recalled Shiratori from Rome. In his stead the Japanese sent Eiji Amau as their ambassador. Amau had been the spokesman of the Japanese Foreign Office in 1934, when Mussolini said the Yellow Peril was not yet extinct and Japan was launched on a career of dangerous imperialism. "Many Japanese make Mussolini a hero, but this statement will cause them to change their tune," Amau told the correspondents in Tokyo at the time.

But in 1940 the Japanese government was shaken up by the militarists, became anti-American, and replaced Amau at Rome, as well as a score of other Japanese diplomats abroad. In September, when the Japanese were moving into Indo-China and Thailand, it finally came about that Germany, Italy, and Japan signed a ten-year military and economic alliance, in Berlin naturally, against the United States. It was called the Tripartite Pact.

The Italians remembered Mussolini's reference to the Yellow Peril, however, for it had been included in a Fascist compendium of the Duce's sayings, entitled *Dizionario Mussoliniana.* They did not like the Japanese, who were a strange race that never sent tourists to Italy. Even the officials of the Italian Foreign Ministry, while always extremely polite toward the Japanese diplomats, never fraternized with them as they did with the British and the Americans. This was all the more marked when, after the British left and relations with

the Americans were strained, the country club where Ciano played golf was infested with the Japanese.

The passage of the lend-lease act in Congress coincided with the Germans taking control in Rome. All foreigners, excepting the Germans, were ordered out of Sicily, where the Nazis were taking over the bases. The American consulates at Naples and Palermo were closed. Washington retaliated by closing the Italian consulates at Newark and Detroit.

With the expulsion of the consular officers the Germans sought to persuade the Italians that those officials were acting as spies, that they signaled to British warships and planes for the bombardments of Genoa and elsewhere. The officers of the Italian government knew better, of course. They were quite aware that if the United States lacked anything abroad, it lacked an espionage system, a very definite handicap to a world power.

Yet persons entering the American embassy were stopped by detectives, who asked for their identity papers and took down their names. This happened to Percy Winner and a few other Americans, mistaken for Italians. No Italian officer or diplomat could see an American in Rome without written permission of his superiors, and private citizens risked having their names inscribed in the black books of the Gestapo. The surveillance over the correspondents was reinforced, and that cut us off more completely from our Italian acquaintances.

Ambassador Phillips and his staff were informed that they could not go beyond the limits of Rome province, or near certain military zones. The same rule was applied to us. More and more we looked to the American diplomats for social companionship.

In March the Nazi propaganda distributed in the Fascist press, under a Berlin date line, the assertion that Roosevelt was offering American help to Yugoslavia if that country would abstain from joining the Axis. The anti-American

campaign in the press raged for days. Like the earlier ones against France and Britain it was intended to prepare the popular mind for eventual hostilities.

In this case the Ministry of Popular Culture had a more formidable task. While Gayda was saying that the United States was already at war with the Axis, while Ansaldo was saying that the United States wanted to make an "economic India" of Europe, the Fascist workingman's paper, *Il Lavoro Fascista,* was attacking the Italians who "murmured" and "complained."

The day the United States seized sixty-six Axis and Danish ships, including twenty-eight Italian merchantmen, Yosuke Matsuoka, the Japanese foreign minister, arrived in Rome from Berlin. He received a properly tumultuous welcome at the station from 100,000 well-disciplined Fascists, waving little paper flags of the Rising Sun. After they saw his face the more disrespectful of the Italians laughed in the cafés and said, "E' arrivato il bello, the handsome one has arrived." Mussolini had declared in a speech that spring would bring il bello, meaning success against the Greeks in his idiomatic usage, but a handsome man in its usual sense.

Shortly afterward Roosevelt asked Italy to recall Admiral Alberto Lais, its naval attaché in Washington, on the ground that he had ordered the sabotage on the seized Italian ships. That was the signal for anti-American student demonstrations throughout Italy. Mussolini asked for the recall from Rome of Captain William C. Bentley, the assistant American military attaché for air. Bill Bentley was one of the frankest, most open-faced and outspoken of the Americans, who could no more have carried on clandestine snooping than a bull in a pasture. His semimonthly poker parties attracted not only the American correspondents, but also Italian and German army officers.

In April, when Roosevelt said the United States Navy would protect the shipping that was taking supplies to Britain, I sold my car to a doctor who was able to obtain a permit to

operate it. I learned immediately afterward that I could have sold it to an Italian hoarder for much more.

At the end of May, Roosevelt made his famous speech to the nation and the world, in which he assailed the Axis belligerents for aiming to overthrow all the peoples of the world and proclaimed the unlimited national emergency. The Italian press played down the speech and published only a carefully edited version. But some temerous Italians obtained copies of the text from the embassy and it was assumed that what the president actually said reached thousands through the grapevine.

This assumption was substantiated in July when seven persons were convicted by the Special Tribunal of copying and distributing speeches of Roosevelt, Knox, and Churchill. Their prison sentences ranged from three to twelve years.

On June 2, Hitler and Mussolini conferred for five hours in an armored train on the Brenner Pass, their first meeting since January. A well-placed informant told me they had agreed on a plan to meet America's intervention in the war. He did not mean the immediate use of the fourteen submarines, capable of operating in American waters, that Italy had laid down in 1938. He meant that Hitler had told Mussolini of his impending attack on Soviet Russia.

The invasion of Russia was to bring the Axis powers wheat for their peoples, Don minerals for their industries, and particularly oil for their war machines for the long war in prospect of American intervention. None of that could be reported, however, since the Italian papers in May had leaked a story that the Germans planned to march through Russia into Iran and were quickly rebuked by the Nazis.

On the first anniversary of Italy's entrance into the war Mussolini delivered a speech before a full-dress session of his Fascist Chamber. He said the United States was already at war with the Axis in fact, though not in law. He assured the Italians that American intervention, even if it was made formal, could not possibly affect the final result of the war, which would be an Axis triumph.

"The Japanese are a proud and loyal people," he said, "and will not remain indifferent in the face of American aggression toward the Axis powers."

He assailed Roosevelt as a dictator, greater than himself. He said, "When one wishes to recall a dictator in the pure classic sense of the word, one cites Sulla. Well, Sulla appears to be a modest dilettante as compared with Del-ano Roosevelt."

Mussolini's mispronunciation of the president's middle name made it deliberately a gross insult. The crowd of Fascist deputies guffawed. None of them missed the obscenity, although few perhaps remembered enough of history to know that Lucius Cornelius Sulla was a dictator of Rome who in 82 B.C. carried out a reign of terror.

When the United States froze Italian funds in America, Italy tied up our funds. For weeks we could obtain nothing from our blocked accounts in the banks. Eventually we could check out enough to meet bills by forwarding the bills to the Ministry of Finance and waiting weeks for its authorization to pay them out of our sequestrated funds.

We expected a break in diplomatic relations, while the few Italians who dared speak to us said they would not be surprised at a declaration of war. Officials at the press ministry treated us with cold formality and it was embarrassing to attend the daily conference. We always went, but with the Germans in control it was a half-hour wasted daily. All we ever got was a day-old handout from Berlin. For example:

One day we asked for the official Italian reaction to some action taken by Roosevelt against the Axis. We were told there was none. The next day, Rocco, the foreign press chief, opened the conference with the announcement that he would read a statement which his "dear colleague, Doctor Schmidt," had read at the previous day's press conference in Berlin. He proceeded to read a two-page attack on the United States and concluded, "That is the Italian point of view exactly. There is nothing more for me to say." A Swiss correspondent spoke up. "But, Excellency," he said, "that statement appeared in my

paper this morning from Berlin. I can't send that." The ambassador, for that was Rocco's title, only blushed.

Roosevelt, finally acting against the Axis spies in America, expelled all the German consuls and propaganda agents. By Germany's order Mussolini joined Hitler in reprisal and ordered the United States consulates closed at Rome, Florence, Milan, Genoa, Venice, and Trieste.

On June 22, as Roosevelt, in reprisal to that, ordered all the Italian consulates closed in America, Hitler ordered his Nazi armies into Russia.

Every American in Rome had heard for weeks that the Germans were about to attack Russia. The Italians, and the Germans themselves, spread the word so insistently that we suspected it was only a bluff to scare the Russians. The Russian embassy had heard it, too, but apparently did not take much stock in it, or else thought Italy would refrain from joining Germany in the attack. At any rate, this is what happened:

Von Mackensen received word from Berlin at four o'clock in the morning and immediately communicated with Mussolini, informing him that Hitler expected Italy to join in the declaration of war. Mussolini informed Ciano, who was waiting at the Palazzo Venezia for his daily conference with the Duce when his father-in-law arrived at nine.

The Soviet ambassador, Gorelkin, had meanwhile gone to the beach at Ostia. Ciano telephoned to the embassy for the ambassador to call on him. A secretary of the embassy speeded out to Ostia and told Gorelkin at ten o'clock that Ciano wanted to see him at noon. At noon Ciano delivered Italy's declaration that, from 5:30 A.M. of June 22, Italy considered herself in a state of war against the U.S.S.R.

Gorelkin's predecessor, Stein, was once quoted as saying, "Mussolini's policy is anti-Bolshevik? Yes. But only in the newspapers."

Italy, in 1924, was one of the first countries to recognize

the Soviet Union. It was one of the first to sign a pact of friendship and nonaggression with Bolshevik Russia. When Italy entered the war in 1940, Ambassador Rosso returned to Moscow and Ambassador Gorelkin returned to Rome.

Before starting the campaign against Greece, Mussolini was afraid that Russia might move into the Balkans, through Bulgaria. That was his only real concern about Hitler's arrangement with Stalin of August, 1939. As he began the Greek campaign Mussolini had Gayda write that there was "a great similarity between the state principles of Italy and Soviet Russia." Gayda asserted that Italy, "inspired by the calm realism of Mussolini," had never taken a hostile attitude toward Russia.

The fact that the Russians never invaded the Balkans may explain why the Italians did not want to fight in Russia after Hitler dragged them into that war, on a par with and no higher in the scale of belligerency than Rumania or Slovakia.

We agreed among ourselves in Rome that the ideological note of Hitler's "Crusade against Bolshevism" would meet with a favorable response among the masses of the Italian people, even among many who were weary of war. In that we were wrong.

At first the Italians were somewhat enthusiastic because the Germans spread the word that Hitler had said he would conquer Russia in six weeks. Many of us thought the same thing. The Italians had confidence in Hitler's blitzkriegs on the continent because they had seen only too well how successful he was. Some of us thought we knew Russia's deficiencies and inefficiencies.

From a conversation at the press ministry I was able to send, on June 23, the following dispatch: "An authoritative source indicated today that Italy expected the German army to produce another blitzkrieg campaign against Soviet Russia, which would end hostilities before forces from Italy could arrive. The source said no arrangements had been made for immediate

military aid in the war against the Soviet Union. Whether Italian troops would be sent, he said, probably would depend upon developments."

Indeed, the Germans advanced so fast in Russia, as the Russians retreated from the frontier, that Mussolini decided he must act quickly if he was to say that the force of Italian arms caused Russia to capitulate as he said it had defeated the French. On June 26 it was announced that Italy would send an expeditionary corps to Russia and Mussolini reviewed the corps' first motorized division, which departed with much Fascist flag waving.

The propaganda mill, meanwhile, had to explain Hitler's seeming volte face toward Russia. The Nazi-supplied explanation was ably summarized by Farinacci in his *Regime Fascista*: "Der Fuehrer had every reason to pretend to believe in Soviet good faith to obtain the following two ends: to eliminate, at least for a moment, a Russian front, and to obtain a great part of the supplies indispensable for his army. But at the proper moment the Soviet comedy had to cease."

As the world knows, Hitler had miscalculated on the Russian collapse. It was harder than he thought it was to get the bread and petroleum for the organization of Nazi-dominated Europe and then bring Turkey, Spain, and Portugal into the Axis, so that there would be no even nominally neutral spot for invaders from the democracies to land.

Hitler had counted on a Russian revolt against the Bolshevik regime, and since he had counted on that, so, too, had Mussolini. They never reckoned with Russian patriotism toward the land, which was something different from animosity toward the Soviet system. The White Russians who had lived in Rome for years as emigrés from the Bolshevik regime went about saying proudly, "This proves the Russians are good soldiers, doesn't it?" until the Fascist press told them in its columns to mind their tongues or they would be kicked out of the country. So far as I know, there was only one Russian

emigré in Rome who professed pro-Nazi sympathies. He was a Ukrainian prince, with a business in Italy prosperous enough to keep him drunk every evening in the fashionable bars.

"We hope to go back to Russia, get our property back, and run the country," he said to me one evening.

"Do you think Hitler would really let you run the country?" I asked.

"No," he admitted. "But I would like to get my father's land back."

In August, Hitler called Mussolini to the Fuehrer's headquarters on the eastern front and let him look over the battlefields. Their five-day conference had two purposes. Roosevelt and Churchill had met on a battleship and drafted the Atlantic Charter for "the final destruction of Nazi tyranny." The two Axis partners drafted their war aim as victory over "Bolshevism and Plutocracy."

Hitler also asked Mussolini to send more troops to Russia. He needed them at least to occupy the territory behind the front. The Duce demurred. His army lacked equipment and arms. Communications over the long railroad route to the Ukraine were bad. There was a shortage of Italian rolling stock. Italy was using its trains to supply Germany with food. It did not have enough rolling stock to supply Germany with both food and troops. As a result it seems that never more than 100,000 Italians were sent to the Russian front up to the middle of 1942.

The real reason was that the Italians were defeated after Libya and Greece. They had too much of war. Furthermore, Russia was so far away from Italy that it was almost a mythical land to them. They did not want to go there. Particularly since the cynical, realistic Italians knew that Hitler's drive into Russia was no crusade against Bolshevism, but a Nazi conquest for wheat and oil, very little of which was likely to reach Italy. They had enough of Hitler's battles.

The principal battle the Italians fought was that in which

the broadcasters engaged with a ghost voice that broke into the Italian programs. At first the Italians resorted to jamming and fast talking to silence the ethereal heckler, who became known among the listeners as Ivan the Terrible. Then the propagandists hit upon the idea of writing their own give-and-take script, with the Italians always giving and the heckler taking. They turned these scripts over to the star commentator, Appelius. A voice would say, "You don't dare to tell what's happening in Rome." "It's raining in Rome," Appelius would say. "Rain is good for the country. It is making the crops grow. Last week they grew so many centimeters." And so on with canned repartee, some of it better than the foregoing sample—the kind of thing one always wishes he had said after he gets home from an argument.

As a matter of fact, the plight of the Italians was pretty bad. As Herbert Matthews remarked, "Time may be working for one side or the other in this war, but certainly it is working against the man in the street."

Every week the Italian had less to eat, wear, and buy. Prices skyrocketed, but wages were blocked at their prewar figure and could not be increased, for that would have caused prices to rise even higher.

Even when warm houses, automobiles, steaks, coffee, and woolen clothes joined the list of disappearing luxuries, when quality became a thing of the past, when the milk had only 3 per cent fat content, when spaghetti was brown for lack of enough wheat flour, and bread became dark and heavy, few observers in Italy, least of all persons in the government, expected the Germans to drain the country until there was an actual food shortage and undernourishment in the poorer classes.

Italy, with the Battle of the Wheat and similar measures, had been striving for years toward self-sufficiency in food. Again Fascism had failed them.

XXIII

Bread and Bootleggers

Feeding its forty-five million inhabitants became Italy's really major problem in the autumn of 1941. Bare subsistence rations for the lower third of the population and little more for many of the people were the price of subservience to Germany.

That, with an advanced stage of price and monetary inflation, embittered the Italians further, not only toward their ally, but toward the Fascist regime and the man responsible for it all, Mussolini.

The government, belatedly, sought to confront the acute food problem by the only measure left to it, the stretching out of the deficient wheat supply. Beginning with October the bread, which was a dark gray, heavy mixture of wheat, rice, potatoes, beans, and only the bakers knew what else, was added to the rationing list.

The bottom third of the Italian public had always lived on bread, olive oil, spaghetti with tomato sauce, and string beans, spinach, or some other leafy vegetable, and fruit. The oil and spaghetti were already rationed under strict German control, with the individual allowed per month what he used to consume in a week.

The bread ration of seven ounces (200 grams) a day per person was a severe blow to this diet. The case of Carlo, the office boy, was typical. At home there were his father, a laborer, his mother, and a brother. They ate an average of a kilogram of bread, 2 1/5 pounds, each a day. Now, instead of

4,000 grams a day, the family was to have only 800 grams. For Carlo, we obtained the supplementary ration of 100 grams allowed laborers in general, while his father was entitled to a supplement of 300 grams because he was engaged in heavy work. But that still amounted to only 1,200 grams a day.

To provide the bulk missing from their diet Carlo's family and others had to buy more potatoes and beans. But dried beans cost 28 4/5 cents (5.6 lire) a kilogram, more than double the price of bread, while potatoes were nearly as expensive. Moreover, when the general public substituted potatoes and beans for spaghetti and bread, the supplies soon became scarce and eventually had to be rationed too. Fruit, too, became scarce.

The food ran out so gradually that one was not at first aware of the scarcity. In July, 1940, one was more aware of the gasoline shortage that forced all motor traffic off the streets at 10 P.M., with taxicabs available after that hour only by telephoning to the nearest police station, giving name, address, telephone number, and a justifiable reason for using a taxi.

At that time bread was rationed in the restaurants, and there were four meatless days. Next fats were rationed. So it went, with foodstuffs dwindling and prices mounting.

In the summer of 1941, the Fascist party intervened in the control of foodstuffs, with the establishment within the party of a central committee for the co-ordination and control of prices of prime necessity.

Registering what appeared to be an immediate success, the party conspicuously ordered a 20 per cent cut in the prices of fresh fruits and vegetables. This simplistic action was promptly followed by a passive strike on the part of produce growers. For days at a time such common products as potatoes, to mention only one, almost disappeared from the market.

The party intervention was accompanied by the most disordered situation in the distribution of foodstuffs that the

country had experienced in twenty years. It later had to be abandoned.

In the autumn came further rations. Hotels, boardinghouses, and restaurants could serve only three dishes at a meal—a soup, a main dish, and cheese or fruit. Spaghetti and rice were forbidden three days a week. Hors d'oeuvres, the Italian antipasto, and desserts were completely prohibited. No more sliced raw ham, sardines, or tuna fish with which to start the meal. Meat had already been cut down to two days a week and no portion must exceed 100 grams, 3½ ounces. As it worked out, the meat markets allowed only 100 grams of beef to an individual for the whole week. It could be purchased on Saturday or Sunday.

Game, fowl, kidneys, liver, and sweetbreads were still obtainable, but there was little fish, because of the gasoline shortage and the floating mines around the coast that kept the fishing boats from going out. Prices were exorbitant.

Pastries and biscuits had been forbidden, except for children and invalids. All types of cheese were ordered withdrawn from the market as a prelude to rationing.

Of the controlled products the only one supplied in normal quantities from the standpoint of per capita consumption was sugar, which was limited to 500 grams a month per person. The oil and fat ration was 400 grams monthly, or 10.56 pounds annually per capita, whereas in 1938, the last normal year, the average per capita consumption was 29.92 pounds.

Even more serious was the combined ration of spaghetti, flour, and rice. It was two kilograms a month, or 52.80 pounds a year, compared to an average consumption in 1938 of 117 pounds.

As the rations were modified this finally became the monthly market basket for the ordinary person: Bread, 10 pounds; spaghetti and rice for soup filler, 4.4 pounds; oil, butter, and lard, 14.4 ounces; beef, including bone, 1.9 pounds, plus varying and meager portions of other meat products;

dried beans, peas, and lentils, 5 ounces; sugar, 1.1 pounds; eggs, 4 (one per week); cheese, varying but small amounts; soap, one-fifth pound.

This list the purchaser sought to supplement from unrationed articles—fresh vegetables and fruits, noticeably reduced in supply in comparison with Italy's normal abundance, an occasional chicken, or rabbit, irregularly obtained, and especially by buying on the black market. The recourse to bootleg dealers was the inevitable reaction to such meager allotments. No amount of publicity and no severity of punishment was able to repress their operations.

A frequently imposed penalty was a five thousand-lire fine and three years or more of imprisonment. Farinacci asked that the death penalty be imposed for food profiteering, and Mussolini promptly authorized it by decree, but it was never applied. To make the prison sentences more impressive the Duce gave warning that there would be no postwar amnesties for the persons involved.

In black market dealings prices became a secondary consideration. Many a consumer limited to one-half pound of oil a month actually welcomed the opportunity to eke out his supply by paying double or more than double the fixed prices. Restricted to one egg a week, he did not let money considerations stand in the way when he could buy a few eggs extra, even at such prices as 4 lire each, as compared with the official price of 1.60 lire. Similarly with spaghetti, meats, butter, lard, soap, and—with the exception of bread, which did not appear to be a preferred article of bootlegging—pretty generally throughout the list of restricted foods.

Nor were the black market operations confined by any means to the merchants. The peasants practiced bootlegging on a large scale. Their illegal hoarding of spaghetti, oil, eggs, meats, for sale at bootlegging prices was particularly difficult of detection. I had a friend who owned a farm near Naples and rented it on the customary mezzadra basis, that is, the ten-

ant did the work and shared the produce with the proprietor. For the first time the tenant asked the owner if he might pay the proprietor's share in cash. It was obvious that he intended to pay at the legal market price for the produce, and sell it on the black market.

City dwellers took to going into the country to buy a suitcase full of provisions from the peasant bootleggers until a special police force was stationed at the railway terminals to inspect all suspiciously heavy baggage that was carried from the trains.

The black market made it possible for many persons of means to set tables showing few signs of inadequacy. Decidedly, however, this did not apply to the greater proportion of the people, whose meager income was woefully inadequate to pay the bootleg prices. For these the deterioration in the standard of living could hardly be exaggerated.

When the working man and the little office worker had to leave an emptied plate with his frugal appetite unsatisfied, with the knowledge that those who were profiting from jobs or contracts under the regime could still eat well, social unrest was the inevitable result. He was bitter toward the rich and particularly toward the rich bureaucrats. The black market operations, so widespread that one was reminded of the prohibition bootlegging in America, did more than anything else, perhaps, to disclose that Fascism was a monumental fraud, that if it had ever approached a proletarian revolution, as it pretended to be, that day was long past. The Italian could not even wash his rancor away with an extra swallow of wine.

In Italy wine has always been a basic item of food. Under rationing the Italian had a particular need for it to integrate his diet. The wine supplies, too, dwindled in the retail market. The price zoomed until Farinacci's magazine *La Vita Italiana* complained that ordinary table wine "cost like perfume."

The 1941 wine output, estimated at 36,000,000 hectoliters,

was decidedly above that of 1940. While under normal conditions the 1941 crop would afford no domestic consumption problem it was deficient for the abnormal wartime needs. Much was set aside for the soldiers and sailors, 4,000,000 hectoliters were needed for the distillation of alcohol to mix with motor fuel and use in the manufacture of synthetic rubber, munitions, and other war materials, and wine was one of the products that Italy had to export in exchange for raw materials.

Italy's total meat production at the outbreak of the war was in the neighborhood of 700,000 metric tons, which had to be supplemented by 80,000 metric tons imported from abroad to provide for the annual consumption, which was scarcely eighteen kilos, or 61.6 pounds, per capita. With Italy's participation in the war even this very low consumption rate for the general public had to be sharply reduced, owing partly to the important reservations for the armed forces, which had first call on the supplies, and to the special efforts of the government to protect the livestock herds from depletion through excessive slaughtering.

Shortage of forage, from a growing scarcity of fertilizers, combined with the overtaxed conditions in railroad and motor transport, brought the drastic reduction of the amount of milk available for distribution. Milk consumption is traditionally low in Italy as compared with that in more northern countries. By October, however, milk lines before the dealers' shops had become a common appearance, and many found it impossible at times to buy any milk at all. Consumers were required to register with their regular suppliers, this entitling them to receive a milk portion representing an equal share of whatever supplies were available. The scarcity was so acute that in Rome the allowance was limited to 3 1/5 ounces (one-eighth of a liter) a day. The butter ration, included in the fats ration with olive oil and lard, was one-tenth pound a month.

Cheese became progressively scarce because of withdrawals

for the army and for shipment to the allied countries. The fat content was reduced so low that the quality deteriorated until the famous Bel Paese, Provalone, Dolce Verde, and Gorgonzola cheeses became impossible to find. New wartime varieties appeared, under new trade names, such as Roma and Promessi Sposi, that tasted like rubber and were only slightly more edible than rubber. The Parmesan cheese essential to an Italian meal was sharply rationed.

The standard of living was further impaired because of the more than doubled cost of living. The cost of living had risen from an index figure of 83.5 in 1936 (by comparison with 1928) to 128 by the end of 1940. From then on the prices of nonrationed foods went up continually until, if the average head of a family were not already forced to drastic reduction in purchases by the physical scarcity of those available, he would have been equally forced to such reduction by the inadequacy of his salary in the face of the enormous advances in prices.

A graphic example of the trend is afforded by the following table of official prices in 1941, in which the kilogram represents 2.2 pounds, the liter a little more than a quart, and the price is given at the Italian government's nominal equivalent of $1 for 19 lire:

	June	*December*
Eggs, each	$0.06	$0.07
Oil, liter	.52	.79
Butter, kilo	1.10	1.40
Lard, kilo	.45	.90
Chicken, kilo	1.35	2.10
Liver, kilo	.70	1.30
Beef, kilo	1.25	1.50
Veal, kilo	1.40	1.75
Vinegar, liter	.10	.20
Toilet Paper, roll	.04	.08
Toilet Soap, cake	.05	.10
Soda, kilo	.02	.08
Almonds, kilo	1.00	2.25
Dried Figs, kilo	.25	.90
Apples, kilo	.20	.40

	June	*December*
Pears, kilo	.18	.35
Onions, kilo	.04	.09
Spinach, kilo	.11	.68
Carrots, kilo	.25	.52
Potatoes, kilo	.05	.07
Lemons, kilo	.05	.12
Cocoa, kilo	1.80	4.15
Tomatoes, kilo	.09	.25
Bread, kilo	.10	.12
Honey, jar	.12	.30
Wine, liter	.12	.30

Inflation ran parallel with the food bootlegging. Anyone possessing the paper that was called money in Italy rushed to exchange it for whatever he could buy. The spending wave reached its height in July and August, with the public increasingly skeptical as to the future of the lira.

A flurry of common stock purchases pushed quotations up a hundred points or so in the period of a few weeks. To check this dislocation of the money market, which held a special threat to the salability of national bonds, the government stepped in with a decree for the recapture by taxation of a large fraction of the profits derived from stock speculation. This action proved to be only a palliative, and stronger measures had to be taken.

Purchasers rushed to the retail shops, where everything was suddenly in great demand. Millions of lire were spent in jewelry alone and retail stocks both in this and the clothing category were threatened with early exhaustion.

In September, Mussolini issued decrees:

1. Prohibiting the further sale of gold and silver, other precious metals, and jewels.

2. Permitting the sale of a comprehensive group of articles of general demand only to persons presenting identity cards —designed to put a stop to inordinate buying in this broader field by making the names of the purchasers available to inspection.

3. Temporarily suspending the sale of clothing and textiles in general.

4. Strictly rationing clothing and textiles on a point basis.

5. Requiring the conversion of bearer shares of common stocks—the preferred medium of security speculation—into nominative shares.

The purpose of this latter measure was to make the identity of stock owners known to the authorities, who were thus enabled to ascertain in what circles the excessive speculation was centered, and incidentally to formulate long-term plans for direct taxation of this large and hitherto anonymous mass of wealth.

The rationing of clothing resulted in greater bootlegging. Stocks of woolen, silk, and leather goods went into the back rooms, for sale at fancy prices to the wealthier customers, for the 120 points a year on the ration card were hardly enough for bare replacements of worn clothing. The poor suffered less from this rationing than the middle class, for many of the lower third of the population had never owned a new suit in their lives. They dressed always in castoffs, except perhaps for cheap and durable work clothing. A bootlegged pair of shoes cost $35, a suit $130. Over the counter a real woolen blanket cost $65 and a single linen face towel $6.

For anything of quality was rare to find. Ersatz products predominated. An office boy bought a pair of shoes. Leather had completely disappeared from the shoes by government order. His were made of imitation leather uppers and combination cork and reclaimed rubber soles. The fixed price was his week's salary of 160 lire, which is to say $8. Within ten weeks one of the soles cracked all the way through its thickness.

Industry slowed down as a result of the exhaustion of raw materials, the shortage of labor, and the generally depleted economy. Fascism's vaunted economic self-sufficiency was a myth, its program a fallacy. A country as poor in resources as

Italy had to rely on world trade. With that trade cut off it could only fall into complete economic subservience to its only ally that controlled the available sources—Germany.

Italy entered the war without adequate stocks of cotton, wool, iron, oil, and other essential raw materials, largely because of Mussolini's arbitrary stabilization of the lira at 19 to the dollar and 90 to the pound sterling late in 1927. Many economists said at the time that it was too high for export trade, but Mussolini had promised he would keep the lira where it was at all costs.

The actual worth of the lira in purchasing power was much less. Italians made a joke of it. A man went into a store and asked for one fig to eat. The dealer said the price was a lira: "What! A fig is not worth a lira," the customer exclaimed. "You mean," said the dealer, "a lira is not worth a fig."

Oil was, of course, Italy's greatest lack, since Albania supplied less than one-tenth of the Italian requirements. Rumania had been an important source of Italian oil, but as Germany took over the wells there, the Nazis rationed only a trickle to Italy, sending instead a certain small amount of German synthetic oil that stank in the nostrils of the Italians. It is doubtful if Italy was getting, altogether, more than one-fifth of its normal requirements, for much of the German gasoline was earmarked for the German air corps in Sicily.

In normal times Italy obtained its iron from Morocco and Spain, scrap from the United States. The blockade cut those sources off in June, 1940.

During the nonbelligerency period Italian industry tried to build up small stocks, but the Bank of Italy's statement showed that only $30,000,000 worth of foreign exchange was available. This fund soon disappeared and for a time the government winked at a semilegal arrangement whereby an importer could obtain dollars to buy raw materials by paying forty, fifty, and as much as sixty lire for them on a sort of "brown bourse."

A year of war depleted the stocks of scrap iron, copper,

tin, nickel, rubber, leather, wool, cotton, and petroleum. The gleaning and regleaning of domestic residues through the requisitioning of private stocks and through pick-up campaigns exhausted this source.

In October, Funk came to Rome and negotiated a series of new agreements merging Italian economy with that of Germany. As Hitler's minister described it, "The Italian and German economies are to be considered as one unit."

Fascism's widely publicized corporative system broke down under the economic stress and political corruption before it ever really had a chance to prove the modern application of the medieval guild system.

It should have been ideal for war, since it gave the government complete control of industry, in fact of the whole economic life of the nation, grouped in twenty-two corporations, or guilds, of employers and workers. Mussolini himself was the president of each guild, but he left most of the work to vice-presidents and councilors, all chosen from the Fascist party.

Loyalty to the party was the chief attribute of the guild leadership. As a result the corporations fell under the control of bureaucrats, who often knew little of the industry they were supposed to represent, and were more interested in lining their pockets from the graft they took on contracts.

To improve the efficiency of the economic machine and remove the causes for social grumbling among the workers, Mussolini cleaned house in the elaborate guilds organization, dropping or shifting nineteen of the twenty-two high-ranking henchmen who directed all phases of Italian economic life. It was the most sweeping shake-up Mussolini had made in years, as drastic as those in the armed forces, the cabinet and the Fascist party leadership. The effects of the shake-up, if any, had not become apparent when we left Italy.

Practically all of the companies in Italy were heavily engaged in the production of materials required for the national

war effort. The leading companies found their financial structures overtaxed by their high rate of activity and the accentuated costs which they had to pay for raw materials, not to mention the substantial credit burden arising from the government's practice of deferring over a period of years its payments for their products.

To meet this situation and to relieve the government and banks of the necessity of extending financial assistance to the companies concerned, authorization was given for capital increases on a conspicuously large scale. Shareholders were invited to subscribe to additional shares and the call on the money markets amounted to several billions of lire.

Among the companies affected were the great chemical concern Montecatini, whose capital was increased from 1,600,000,000 to 2,000,000,000 lire; the steel company Ilva, from 1,000,000,000 to 1,250,000,000 lire; the automobile and aviation producers Alfa Romeo, Isotta Fraschini; the Pirelli rubber manufacturing concern, and companies in the electrical, textiles, munitions, minerals, and other fields.

This confirmed the trend of Italian industry toward ever greater concentration in a restricted number of units, or trusts, and to a vast expansion in plant structure having perilous implications for the postwar period.

The control of the monopolistic trusts was in the hands of a few of the nation's richest men and they made ridiculous twaddle of Mussolini's assertion that he and Hitler were fighting plutocracy.

Italy was a greater plutocracy than the United States could ever be under any system but that of Fascist totalitarianism. The plutocrats of Italy, through their positions and influence in the country's single party, ruled the nation more than a Morgan, a Rockefeller, or a Ford could with his campaign contributions.

The most powerful men in Italian life were such men as Senator Agnelli, the head of the Fiat motor works, Count

Volpi di Misurata, a greater utilities magnate than Samuel Insull ever was, the big industrial leaders who run Montecatini, Snia Viscosa rayon, the shipping, banking, and insurance monopolies.

Other plutocrats were among those who gained great wealth from Fascism—Ciano, Starace, Rafaello Riccardi, the minister of trade and foreign exchange, who is reputed to have made millions helping businessmen put over exchange deals.

The knowledge that a handful of men ruled the economy of the nation, while the Fascist hierarch could make lots of money, get plenty of food, and do all sorts of forbidden things made them the hated class, combining the political boss, the newly rich, and the oppressor.

Fascism regimented labor as the Nazi regime did in Germany. By a stroke of the pen Mussolini compelled rural Italians to remain in rural areas, or sent thousands of workers to Germany and Albania.

Dictatorship had freed Italy of labor troubles by outlawing strikes and lockouts. But the only wage increases permitted were those ordered by the government, which before the war came about once a year and never caught up with the mounting cost of living. Wages and salaries were blocked for the duration of the war, but the distress was so great in 1941 and the grumbling so persistent that the government evaded its regulation by ordering a single extra wage and salary that year which was the equivalent of 4 per cent of a worker's income and 8 per cent of the salaried man's.

With the advent of the war the government scrapped a clause of the collective labor contracts and enforced a working day of first ten, then twelve hours in the mechanical industries, without an overtime allowance for the extra hours. When the war snarled communications the government decreed a seven-day working week for all railroad employes engaged in loading and unloading freight.

Unemployment figures were not published in Italy, but sev-

eral hundred thousand were jobless before the war. The unemployment benefit was fifty lire a week and lasted only three months. The able-bodied of the unemployed were presumably conscripted for the army and some of the others would be drafted into the compulsory labor service for men from 15 to 55. But that meant little relief for industry, where the need was for skilled workers.

Taxation was always heavy and became heavier with the war. It was felt by the average Italian both in the income tax and the price of food, the excise taxes, the transaction tax, the stamp taxes, and other levies.

Financially, Fascism was no better investment than democracy. It was a worse investment, because one got so much less for his money.

XXIV

A Japanese Invitation

"Mr. Y. Ando, the Councillor of the Japanese Embassy, would have a pleasure to invite Mr. R. Massok to a tea in his house at six o'clock, the 3rd December.

"Via Alberto Caroncini
"No. 51 int 4."

When the maid handed me the card on my return from the office for dinner I thought: "Strange! Why should Mr. Y. Ando have such a pleasure at this moment? I've never met the gentleman. I wonder what the Y stands for. Probably something like Yokomoto. He must know that a countryman of his, Kurusu, is talking with Hull about a situation in the Pacific, that the Italian press says the situation is hopeless, the negotiations cannot succeed, and there will be war between Japan and the United States. No German diplomat has invited Mr. R. Massok, or rather Mr. R. Massock, to his house for tea in the last year and no Italian diplomat in the last several months. No Japanese diplomat has done it since Mr. R. Massock left Moscow. Could it be that Japan is quitting the Tripartite Pact and Mr. Y. Ando wants me as an American for a tea-party friend? Probably not."

I mixed a little Italian gin with a drop of Italian vermouth, stirred the liquid around a cube of ice in a crystal brandy balloon, wondered how I could pack the globe so it would not be broken, sipped the cocktail, remembered it had to be called an arlechino by edict of the Royal Academy of Italy because cocktail is an English word, and decided I would have to leave the crystal balloon behind when the United States and Italy

found themselves at war. I hated to do it because it was made for mixing Martinis, had a pouring lip, and was the gift of a dear Italian friend.

I told Elena she could serve dinner. After dinner I looked for something to read.

Kay had left Rome in October and was already in New York. I had insisted that she go and she had gone, protesting. "This is a mistake, I know it," she said. "Things are going to drag along like they are for a long time yet and I might as well stay in Rome."

"Don't be silly," I replied. "It is only a matter of a few months, if not a few weeks before I will have to leave."

"But I want to go out on the diplomatic train when war comes."

"Run along now," I said. "You don't know how many trunks we can take on a diplomatic train. You might have to leave some of your clothes behind. You have your visa from the Italian police, allowing you to leave the country. Better use it."

The evening of her departure some American friends, and a few Italians who were faithful friends to the last, dropped in, one or two at a time, to say good-bye, because only persons with train tickets were allowed on station platforms and there was no more seeing-off departing friends. Kay wept, and the maid wept, and when we finally got into a taxi, the door porter's wife wept. The farewell made the blacked-out station all the gloomier. The trip was not a bad one though, and Kay wrote from Switzerland that at the frontier the Italian police agents who inspected her American passport and the Italian customs agents who inspected her baggage were "perfect darlings."

Since then I had been waiting for the Axis to start the shooting war with the United States.

There was not much left to read in the apartment, so I picked up Mussolini's *I Speak with Bruno.*

Captain Bruno Mussolini, the Duce's second son, was killed near San Giusto airport at Pisa when a four-motored bomber, with a crew of six others, that he was testing crashed in August. Bruno was 23 years old at the time, but he had been an aviator for years and had flown the Atlantic. The Rome radio, announcing the accident, said Bruno died "a glorious death at the post of combat." It seems, from the subsequent investigating commission's report, that the plane was found to be all right mechanically, but one of the four survivors said a lever jammed when Bruno took over the controls.

There had been a funeral at Dovia di Predappio, the father's birthplace, with the highest honors the nation could pay a fallen soldier. The diplomatic corps from Rome, excepting the Americans, attended the funeral, along with cabinet ministers, Fascist officials, army, navy, and air force officers. The Fascist secretary-general, Serena, had shouted, "Captain Pilot of the Atlantic, Bruno Mussolini!" And the crowd had responded with the Fascist salute to the dead, "Present!" Afterward Mussolini went to the diplomats and said, "Thank you, gentlemen, for having wished to render this honor to a soldier of Italy."

Ciano was not present because he had just had his tonsils taken out.

All this, including Ciano's illness, was in the book, which the Duce had written a month afterward and addressed to his favorite son. It disclosed quite a bit of a father's feelings at such a loss. It revealed that Bruno had always behaved before Mussolini "as an ordinary soldier in the presence of his chief." "Certainly, I did not educate you for an easy life," the Duce wrote. "My 'live dangerously' was practiced in your life." The book was the soliloquy of a lonely man who had not even been able to unbend toward his children.

I wondered how many copies of the book would be sold, probably a lot, because Mussolini's newspaper *Il Popolo d'Italia* was taking voluntary subscriptions to it and the list of subscribers would be available to the Fascist organization

for inspection. If anybody wanted something from the regime, it would be a good idea to have his name on the list.

December 3 came and I had forgotten the invitation to Mr. Y. Ando's tea party, but a Japanese telephoned from the embassy to remind me.

Mr. Y. Ando's "house" I found to be a modernistic Italian apartment. In it, among other things, were a dining table loaded with cold turkey and other delicacies, whisky, champagne, and tea, and a half-dozen officials of the Japanese embassy, including Mr. Y. Ando. The host was tall, displayed a lot of teeth in a perpetual smile, and did not hiss as much as the others. From the conversation it seemed that all of them had visited the United States at one time or another and thought it was a great country and the Americans were a great people. The Japanese loved the Americans. It also developed that most of them had been in Berlin much more recently. But they only smiled and offered another cup of tea, or glass of whisky, if you asked, as I did, if they had any reports from Washington.

The strange thing about the tea party was that only a half-dozen American correspondents were the guests. There was a pervading air of embarrassment that hastened our departure. We dismissed the mystery as an effort to gain some American good will through the American correspondents in Rome, and suspected a nigger in the Japanese rock garden.

If the Japanese embassy in Rome expected us to write dispatches to mislead Americans into a belief that Japan was not going to war against them, it was disappointed, for none of us did it. I still wonder why the Foreign Office at Tokyo, for the strange tea party must have been commanded, wanted the counsellor in Rome to entertain us. Particularly since a similar invitation was sent to the staff of the American embassy in Rome for a tea party the next week. That tea party was never given.

A message from the Cable Desk in New York, notifying

me of the attack on Pearl Harbor, was flashed through Bern a few minutes before the London radio gave the news.

I knew that whatever Hitler did, Mussolini perforce would do, and I feared the worst.

It was two days before we learned Hitler's decision. During that time, so far as I could observe, the Italian people were as apathetic toward the war in the Pacific as they were toward that in Europe, now that Italy was defeated.

After Pearl Harbor, my journal shows the following entries:

December 8—Italian solidarity with Japan was today's press conference comment, with advice to us to wait for developments.

December 9—From the (American) embassy, I learned Claffey, the diplomatic courier, had been refused the customary passport visa, which was a tip-off of the break. The censor forced me to withhold the story.

December 10—Berlin announced that Hitler would make an important announcement to the Reichstag tomorrow. Our story is that Rome will do whatever Berlin does. We heard the Berlin correspondents had been sent to their homes and within a few hours we learned our communications had been cut off. My last dispatch failed to move for this reason.

December 11—Awakened at 8 by a telephone call from some official at the press ministry, who did not give his name. Said the American correspondents would not be admitted to today's press conference. As though we intended to be there, with no means of sending a story.

At the office I learned that Mussolini would speak from his balcony at three o'clock, at the same hour the Reichstag met in Berlin. It was then that Hitler and Mussolini were going to declare war on the United States. Excitement took away my appetite so that I could eat only a light lunch with my two acquaintances.

After listening to Mussolini I returned to the office to pay off the Italian staff and say good-bye. The bureau's affairs were virtually liquidated, but I dawdled in the office where I had worked for more than three years.

At 4:25, as I was about to leave to go to the embassy, Aguesci, the chief of the foreign section of the Questura, appeared in the office with a detective and told me I must go with them. I had an envelope of personal letters and an electric razor in my hand. I asked Aguesci if I should take them, or if I was coming back to the office. Aguesci said to leave them.

They walked me half a mile to the Questura. On the way we passed Santamaria, of *La Tribuna*, a Fascist shock trooper, war correspondent, and member of the Chamber of Fasces and Guilds. Santamaria smiled, waved his hand, and said, "Buon giorno." Aguesci asked me if he was an American. I told him he was a consigliere nazionale, the title of a Fascist deputy.

At the Questura I found that mine was the dubious distinction of being the first American correspondent arrested. I was told to sit in a chair in one of the small offices on the ground floor. A detective was writing out a report and another was reading a newspaper. It reminded me of the back room of the police station at Springfield, Illinois, when I was a reporter there. Here, instead of the fly-specked advertising calendar that I remembered, the Italian police had pictures of the king and Mussolini on the wall. The detectives paid no attention to me.

I had been there about fifteen minutes when a third detective brought in Camille Cianfarra, of the New York *Times*. We exchanged a few words. I still thought it was only a general roundup of the correspondents and that we would be confined to our homes until the diplomatic train left.

At about five, two detectives took charge of Cianfarra and me. They led us to a taxi. Then I learned we were being taken to Regina Coeli, the big, bleak, gray old combination of jail

and penitentiary named, I never learned why, for the Queen of Heaven. It was dark when we arrived there. In Italy prisoners always pay for the taxi. I paid.

Inside the prison it was already night. We were introduced into a large reception office, where a rude official entered our names, pedigrees, and fingerprints in an enormous book. Then we were placed in a dark cell, with a bench along one wall, a toilet that flushed automatically, and nothing else. The toilet flushed as regularly and about as often as a traffic light changes from red to green.

It was cold, for the prison, I was to learn, was without any heating whatever. The single small blue light in the ceiling of the dark cell, the cold, the monotonous flushing of the smelly toilet began to depress me.

We had been in the cell fifteen minutes perhaps when we were called for and conducted across the corridor to a room where prisoners were searched. Ahead of us were five poor devils in rags. Each in turn was obliged to divest himself of his tatters and these were turned inside out by a guard. When the vagrants were led away—for we learned they were tramps—it was our turn to take off our clothes for the search.

First we were forced to empty our pockets on a desk in front of a guard. He listed the money and valuables in a book and had us add our signatures. The valuables—watch, cuff links, cigarette case—were put away in separate envelopes for each prisoner. Other articles were wrapped in a bundle by a trusty and stored on a shelf. We were permitted to keep only combs and eyeglasses. No pencils were allowed. Neckties, belts, suspenders, garters, and scarfs were taken from us, lest we might strangle one another, I suppose. All metal was removed. Even the buckles on the straps across the backs of our waistcoats were ripped off. We shivered as we stripped to our underwear while a guard turned our pockets inside out and felt through each lining. The search completed, we put our clothes back on and were taken out into the corridor, where we found the five vagrants waiting for us.

The seven of us were marched in column of twos through long corridors, halting only for the unlocking of a succession of steel doors, until we reached a certain cell block whose outlines were a dim nightmare in the murky dark of the badly lighted prison.

Here we were handed our dirty, smelly bedding and greasy eating utensils. We carried to our cell in the third tier of the block a bag of straw which was our mattress, two filthy blankets, two coarse sheets gray with the stains of use, a straw pillow with a case as gray as the sheets. Wrapped up in these were a large crock, an aluminum pitcher, aluminum cup, and wooden fork and spoon, slippery with grease stains. Apparently they had been in use since the prerationing era.

In the cell we found folding iron cots shaky from age and on these, by the faint blue light of a tiny electric bulb, we spread our bedding. Our utensils we placed on small shelves built across the corners of the cell a foot above our heads.

The cell door was solid, of thick oak, with a small Judas-door cut into it, through which we later learned our food would be passed. The cell itself was scarcely large enough to contain four cots, two against either lateral wall, with a narrow passage between. At the end, opposite the door, was a large window, made secure against escape by iron bars, a strong metal screen, and a wooden shutter, whose slats sloped upward and outward, so that one could see the sky but not the ground.

For a minute the turnkey stood in the door and told us the prison contained two thousand prisoners. It was centuries old, but had been remodeled from time to time. He asked what we were in for, and when we told him, he said he had a relative, his father, as I recall, in the United States.

A trusty, in a thick woolen uniform with broad blue and white vertical stripes, brought a large terra-cotta jar, resembling an oversize flowerpot, set it on the floor in a corner of the cell, and asked us for a cigarette. I thought what a nice, warm suit of pyjamas his uniform would make.

Once the door was locked on us I experienced a momentary wave of claustrophobia. It was the first time I had ever been locked up against my will in a small room, which I could not leave, from which I could not even look out. That door shut us off completely from the world, and that was no figure of speech.

Each of us had been given a loaf of bread when we entered the cell. Although it was our only supper, that and the water with which the trusty filled our pitchers, neither Cianfarra nor I ate any. Cian had eaten a large dinner in midafternoon at the San Carlo restaurant. I had tasted little but a slice of toast and a bowl of soup since the night before. But I was skeptical of that bread in the dark, although the vagrants had started munching it as soon as it was handed to us.

We threw ourselves on our cots. It must have been shortly after 6 P.M. Exhausted by several months of strain in the war of nerves, without staff help, for I had already evacuated my colleagues in the office, tired from the excitement of the day, I fell immediately into a light sleep. Cianfarra says I snored.

The noise of voices on the steel runway outside the cell and the opening of our cell door awoke me. I was delighted to see, or rather to hear, in the dark, the entrance of the New York *Times* chief correspondent, Herbert Matthews, with a roll of bedding and a loaf of bread.

Matthews looked glum, but probably no glummer than we looked when we entered. He sat on the edge of his cot, eating his bread, for Herbert is fond of food, and we talked for an hour or so about our experiences of the day. After that, fully dressed, with our overcoats spread as blankets, we went to sleep—or at least I did—for the night.

At 6 A.M. we were awakened by a prisonkeeper and two guards entering the cell and banging on the window bars with an iron rod to see if they were still sound. We had to get up, fold our beds, and stand with nothing to do and nothing to sit down on.

Two hours dragged themselves out in the cold cell and then we were marched to hot shower baths on the ground floor, where we were given slivers shaven from a cake of laundry soap, literally in postage-stamp size, and bathed. My bath towel was like a sheet and may have been one at a certain time. The bath was refreshing, however, and we enjoyed it so much we asked if we could have another the next morning. The guard said he didn't know, nobody had ever made that request, prisoners usually were allowed to bathe once a fortnight.

When we were back in our cell Herbert, by some wizardry of economy, produced a fragment of his soap sliver that he had saved.

That morning we heard the jailers bring two United Press men, Reynolds Packard, the bureau manager, and Robert Livingston Pomeroy, to a cell. At eleven we were led outdoors for air and there met another U.P. man, Robert Allen-Tuska.

It was impossible to exercise outdoors, for we were locked with other prisoners, some fifteen of us altogether, in a segment of a small, circular pen. A guard stood in an observation tower above the pen and in its center, keeping watch on the groups of prisoners in the several segments, separated from one another by high concrete walls.

After an hour in the open air we marched back to our cell, where at noon was served the only meal of the day. It consisted of a thin soup with a few large lumps of vegetables and the leaves of some green plant in it. There was no meat and only a few globules of oil on the surface. We received a large crockful of this, but it was unseasoned with salt or anything else and tasted so vile that I could not swallow mine. Neither did I have any appetite for the bread, brownish gray and dry, that we had received the night before.

Ever since entering the prison we had begged permission to move into a better cell for which we could pay. In the late

afternoon, as our morale reached low ebb within the poor common cell, we were moved, Cianfarra and I, into another cell near by, Matthews somewhere else. We paced the floor and talked of anything to keep our minds off our discomforts and out of depression.

In a few hours the turnkey came to our door, opened it, and ordered us out with our paraphernalia, commanding us to hurry with the "Forza! Forza! Come on, Come on," which we heard every time we were addressed. Cian's mercurial enthusiasm got the better of him and he shouted in jubilation that we were leaving the prison. It was a premature celebration and the let-down was sickening when we found ourselves transferred to another cell on the ground floor.

Here our spirits lifted, however, at an improvement in conditions. We were to pay for this cell, so it was more cleanly whitewashed, had woolen mattresses on the cots instead of the sacks of straw, the bed linen was whiter, the utensils cleaner, and there were a deal table and two kitchen chairs. We felt we had found luxury and Matthews, when he saw his cell, enthusiastically exclaimed, "It's as good as any room in a first-class hotel." I reminded him of the rooms in the Grand Hotel, where he was living before his arrest and which he apparently had forgotten in twenty-four hours. But I had to admit that the new cells were much better for the morale.

For one thing we now could order food which we were to pay for. Although it was evening and in prison only one meal is served—at midday—we sent word to the warden that we were famished and would like to buy whatever was available. He consented and we were served with cold canned beef, cheese, fruit, and wine. It was my first food in more than twenty-four hours.

At night there was still only a dim blue light in the cell and one could not read, but we were promised books for the morrow. After a long night's sleep we awoke to the luxury of having a trusty clean out our cell, for which we paid him in

cigarettes, obtainable from the prison commissary. We waited eagerly for the hour in the open air. Meanwhile, I opened a book which the turnkey had brought me from the prison library. It was an inspirational novel, naturally in Italian, on the religious life of Leonardo da Vinci, written in the style of an Elsie Dinsmore book.

At noon our food was brought, but we still had not been ordered out for the airing. I asked about it and the turnkey said, "Perhaps you are going away from here. But don't be too happy about it. I don't know where you are going."

Nevertheless, we were happy. I felt the release was connected in some way with a visit which a clerk of the embassy had paid to us on behalf of the chargé d'affaires, George Wadsworth, to see if we were well-treated and needed anything.

We later learned the Italian Foreign Ministry had ordered our arrests on hearing that the Italian newspapermen in the United States were arrested. In their zeal at reprisals the Italians had put us in prison as common criminals, whereas in the United States the Italians were interned at Ellis Island. When this was pointed out to the Rome authorities they looked for the equivalent of Ellis Island conditions for us, and hit on a boardinghouse which had been used for the internment of Yugoslavs, Chinese, and Russians before us.

We were checked out of the prison just forty-eight hours after entering it and taken to the Pensione Suquet in the Corso Umberto. Some were lucky enough to find a taxi. I was taken by streetcar, in the company of an English-speaking Italian detective born in New York.

We climbed three narrow flights of stairs from the Corso Umberto and found ourselves in a small, dingy, shabby, fourth-rate boardinghouse. Under any other conditions it would have been depressing and no American with five dollars in his pockets would have thought of entering the place. But coming directly from a prison cell I found my small, cheap,

threadbare room not too bad. We eventually learned from the plainclothes detectives posted at our doors in successive eight-hour watches that the Pensione Suquet, named for a suburban quarter of Cannes, the famous French Riviera resort, was a bordello in its salad days.

We had three rooms apart on the third floor, two of them small, the third fairly large. We used the largest room not only as a bedroom for two of the internees, but also as our dining and assembly room. I christened our group the Suquet Sporting and Debating Society, because we immediately began to play bridge, backgammon, and chess, and argue about the atrocities of our partners' bridge playing. It was the most exclusive club in the world, for no new members could join and none could resign without an order from Italian police headquarters.

Cian's wife, Edda; Pack's wife, Eleanor, more affectionately called Pibe, and Allen-Tuska's wife, Fatin, got permission to visit us. The food was fairly good and the wives sometimes would lunch with us, Pibe Packard bringing soup in a huge thermos jug from their apartment two blocks down the Corso.

From the Suquet the police telephoned to our apartments and had our servants bring us what we desired. I recovered my razor and letters. After several days we received permission, on our request, to go walking with our detectives. It was thus that I visited the Rome Zoo for the first time.

The third day of our compulsory club life the police brought us Mrs. Louise Dudley Lynch Getty, young red-haired student of operatic singing. As Teddy Lynch, debutante singer, she had served her vocalistic apprenticeship in New York's Stork Club and at the Waldorf-Astoria Roof, before coming to Rome to study with a maestro. For two years she had been married to J. Paul Getty, multimillionaire California oil man. We were acquainted with her as a stunning member of the American colony. As a matter of fact, Allen Raymond had arranged for Teddy to have a journalist's cre-

dentials so that she might stay on in Rome and complete her musical education.

Teddy, therefore, was welcomed into the Suquet Society. She told us she was arrested December 12 and taken to the Mantellate, the central women's prison behind the Regina Coeli. Because all the cells were full she spent the first night on a mattress on the floor of a drafty corridor. The next day her jailers placed her in a cell with a thief, an abortionist, and a third woman who was "just arrested." Teddy was held without questioning for five days before she was assigned to a room in the Pensione Suquet.

On our sixth day in the Suquet, Wadsworth called on us. He was immediately struck by the shabbiness and dreariness of the place. Perhaps it was owing to a report he made to Washington through the Italian Foreign Ministry that we were informed the next day that we were to leave the following day, Sunday, for Siena, where we would have the freedom of the city. The departure was subsequently postponed to Monday to allow us time to visit our apartments and pack our bags.

At noon Monday, December 22, the Suquet group left Rome by train for Siena, where we arrived in the afternoon and took rooms in the Excelsior Hotel. A large second-floor living room we made into our clubroom, with tables for bridge, backgammon, dominoes, and chess, a lot of books we brought from Rome, and an improvised bar.

Picturesque, medieval Siena and its luxurious Excelsior Hotel restored us to normal cheerfulness. Herbert Matthews and I walked up and down the city's steep streets, admiring the remnants of square, brick medieval towers and the palaces, particularly that of the Piccolomini family, which had sheltered Galileo when he was interned in Siena by the Inquisition. We visited the Public Palace, with Ambrogio Lorenzetti's famous mural of Good Government and a unique tower rising above the broad, open campo or square, where every sum-

mer in peacetimes a medieval horse race, called the palio, took place.

In the curious zebra-striped black and white cathedral we saw the murals of Pinturicchio, the famous marble pulpit of Nicola Pisano, and the stone floor with its inlaid pictures by some of Tuscany's most celebrated artists. We visited the house of the great Saint Catherine, the passionate, politically minded Nun who became a patron saint of Italy. In the Church of San Domenico we saw Sodoma's masterful painting of the Swooning of Saint Catherine.

We played Russian billiards in a café and we had the Excelsior install a ping-pong table. On our arrival we were taken before the Siena chief of police, who instructed us that we must remain within the old walls of the city. But we rented bicycles and by every day stretching the distance to which we cycled we managed to tour the green Tuscan hills for miles about, with their castles, villas, and farmhouses, and the gorgeous landscape that is one of Italy's gifts of the gods. That also enabled us shamelessly to buy eggs from the peasants to eke out our ration of one cold-storage egg a week.

With these diversions we helped pass the days that stretched into weeks and the weeks that passed into months, while we awaited repatriation. But the enforced idleness, the uncertainty as to when we would be allowed to leave, and the constant association with one another was a terrific strain. One can only appreciate it if he has tried to pass sixteen waking hours day after day, with no purposeful activity to perform, no knowledge of how long he must invent mental and physical exercises. We went through a period of concentration on water-color painting. We attended every concert, the performances of every operatic troupe or dramatic stock company that came to town, and the weekly girl-shows at the Impero vaudeville theater. We went to see poor German films, and worse Italian ones.

Teddy Lynch hired a piano, engaged a tutor, and resumed

her music lessons. She and the Packards bought countless cages of birds and conducted an egg-laying contest. Herbert Matthews read all of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and was well into the Bible before we left. I read all of the *Arabian Nights* and was well into a new and excellently annotated Italian edition of *The Divine Comedy*, made the more interesting because the houses of Siena's characters in Dante's masterpiece were marked with inscriptions from the text. To soften the mental impact of so much intellectuality, we devoured a quantity of mystery stories.

The Sienese ignored us and we behaved as unobtrusively as we could. A provincial detective with handlebar mustaches out of an old-fashioned melodrama kept us under a discreet surveillance when we went into the street in a group. We asked him one day why he did it and he replied that it was only for our protection, lest some superpatriot took offense at the presence of enemy aliens who spoke English in public. The detective never had to intervene.

Once we were called before the chief of police, who informed us of two complaints against us. We stayed up late at night and disturbed other occupants of the hotel with our bridge arguments and the rolling of our backgammon dice. We asked for bootleg foods in the restaurants. We denied both charges. Finally the chief said, "As journalists you belong to an intelligent class. I am only asking you to be discreet."

Several weeks later we were summoned before the police again. We inquired in advance through the grapevine that correspondents string wherever they are and were informed of a number of charges against us. These included the accusation that Teddy Lynch had worn slacks in the hotel. The wearing of slacks by women in Italy was forbidden by the Fascist regime. Another accusation was that some of us smoked pipes in the hotel lobby in "an arrogant manner." Since only Allen-Tuska and I were pipe smokers I took personal offense at the reported charge and demanded, in a council we held in the

clubroom, that we make it a point for rebuttal. Packard, who did not smoke, objected and we had a stormy argument. Before going to bed I wrote out in Italian my indignant case for presentation to the police. I had it in my pocket when we appeared at the police station the next morning. To our astonishment we were conducted before, not the chief of police, but a Swiss representative of the International Red Cross. He had come to Siena to see if we were well treated and had any complaints. We told him we had no complaints.

Breakfast consisted of one of the three small rolls the ration allowed us daily, a dab of apple butter, and a cup of coffee substitute. Lunch and dinner were alike, the regulation three wartime courses—soup or spaghetti; fish, fowl, chicken livers, tripe, or rabbit-hamburgers, and at noon Saturday the one small portion of beef or veal allowed weekly; and cheese or fruit for dessert. The rationing regulations required that after the meat lunch the Saturday dinner and both meals Sunday must be strictly vegetarian, without cheese, eggs, or any other animal product figuring in the menu. We scouted among the shops of Siena constantly for salami and cheese to consume in our clubroom. We bought chocolate candy at $6.80 a pound to supply something sweet.

From Rome we heard the delay in our repatriation came about because Washington and Rome were in disaccord as to who of their respective nationals were to be repatriated. The Italian government with 127 Italians in the United States whom it wished to bring home proposed to do so by establishing two classes—diplomats and notables, among whom would be included correspondents. The State Department at first recognized only two categories—diplomats and newspapermen.

In April I obtained permission from the police to visit Rome to attend to some personal affairs, not only for myself, but for others of the internees. A detective accompanied me to Rome and turned me over to detectives there who watched

over me day and night, accompanying me wherever I went, sitting in a chair outside my room at the Grand Hotel while I slept.

That was the surveillance exercised over the members of the embassy staff, each member of which had his three detectives a day until some of them became friends of four months' standing. The embassy people lived in the Grand, Majestic, and Flora hotels. One was supposed to eat in his bedroom and mostly one did, but occasionally one dined out, under the guardianship of his detective, for Italian regulations are observed in the breaking of them.

The large embassy staff, having a less closely knit community life, were much more bored than we were in Siena. They listened to the news broadcasts from the United States and London, something we did, too, at Siena. They played solitaire until the spots were worn off the cards, and they had a croquet set, an archery outfit, and a baseball for exercise in the spacious embassy grounds.

In Rome I learned how Ciano had presented Italy's declaration of war to Wadsworth and how Wadsworth was maintaining daily contact with the Italian Foreign Ministry, for the settlement of the repatriation problems, through calls made at the Ministry by two of the embassy secretaries, Elbridge Durbrow and Merritt Cootes.

The Foreign Ministry had telephoned at one-thirty the afternoon of December 11 for Wadsworth to see Ciano at two-thirty. When Wadsworth entered Ciano's large office in the Chigi Palace, the foreign minister rose from his desk, gave the Fascist salute, and with extreme formality spoke the single sentence:

"I have sent for you to tell you in the name of my king and in that of the Italian government that as of today, Italy considers itself at war with the United States."

Ciano spoke in English.

Wadsworth said he was sorry and asked leave to present

a note from Ambassador Phillips, which Ciano at first said he could not accept. Then he said, "Let me see it." The note thanked Ciano for the friendship and helpfulness which the foreign minister had always shown him. Ciano said, "Please thank Mr. Phillips for his message. I, too, have appreciated our friendship."

While this reached me indirectly, and I have no confirmation from either Ambassador Phillips or George Wadsworth, I believe the note was left for delivery to Ciano when the ambassador departed from Rome, that it was the usual farewell message left by a departing ambassador, written without the declaration of war in mind, and that this was the first occasion Wadsworth had to present it.

A day or so after that the Cuban minister called on Ciano. The foreign minister greeted him affably, motioned him to a seat and asked, "What can I do for you?" The minister remained standing. "I have come," he said, "to tell you that my government has instructed me to inform you that Cuba considers itself at war with Italy."

At that time the Latin-American countries were acting so swiftly that a foreign office official complained he could not remember with what countries Italy was at war and with what others there had been only the severance of diplomatic relations. "Why," he said, "one minister even declared war by telephone!"

Teddy Lynch was one of Wadsworth's problems, because there was doubt in somebody's mind as to her eligibility for repatriation, since she was an Italian-accredited, but not an Italian-acknowledged, "collaborator" of the New York *Herald Tribune*. Wadsworth settled that case satisfactorily, as he did the others, through long, patient negotiation.

One of the most difficult cases was that of the Reverend Hiram Gruber Woolf, of Elmira, N. Y., rector of Saint Paul's Protestant Episcopal Church, the American church of Rome, attended by the embassy staff. A few days before he was to

conduct the depleted colony's Thanksgiving Day service in November two detectives visited the rectory, searched it, seized a tray of visiting cards, and conducted the Padre, as he was known to all of us, off to Regina Coeli.

With great difficulty the embassy learned that the clergyman was charged with "intelligence" activity. A young Italian officer who was a member of the church was accused of having left a letter containing confidential information at the rectory for a third person to pick up. This was possible, without the clergyman's knowledge of the letter's contents, for the rectory was visited throughout the day by members of the church. Another Italian officer was involved in the case.

All the while we were in Siena the Padre was held incommunicado in prison, awaiting trial by the Fascist Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State. From his confinement he wrote to a faithful servant, "I understand now why so many people go mad in prison."

Wadsworth insisted on Woolf's inclusion among the Americans allowed to leave Italy. Our government supported this with a threat of criminal proceedings against thirteen prominent Italians in the United States, against whom it said serious charges could be made.

Two other American prisoners in Italy were Colonel Michael Buckley, an observer of the United States Army with the British forces in Egypt, and Harold Denny, the war correspondent of the New York *Times*. Hal and Jean Denny we had known well and fondly in Moscow. Hal and Mike Buckley were captured in a tank battle in the Libyan desert in November.

After my return from Rome we were not long in Siena until, May 3, we were transferred to Rome for the imminent departure. So few were the trains that they were packed and we were jammed into a vestibule for the five-hour trip. There were no dining cars, sleeping cars, or first-class carriages on

the Italian railroads any longer. They had been removed to permit the hauling of more second- and third-class coaches.

Our descent in Rome was the strangest sight to the Romans since the captured British military attaché in Yugoslavia had stepped off a train there in the kilt of a Highland regiment. For want of taxis we had to walk the few blocks to the Grand Hotel. Teddy Lynch and Pomeroy led the way. Teddy was encumbered with the many handbags that women always carry when they travel. Pomeroy had Teddy's fur coat over one arm and held a bird cage with the other hand. The rest of us kept pace behind, followed by a squad of detectives. A string of porters, shouldering our forty pieces of baggage, snaked after us, to complete what must have seemed a safari across the broad Piazza Esedra. Italians stopped to gape, but we attracted no demonstration of hostility.

At the Grand Hotel I encountered Denny, who had been transferred from a prison camp at Poppi the same day. He had grown a white beard, to convince the Italians, he said, that he had passed the fighting age and should be released. We arranged for adjoining rooms, and Hal stretched out in a chaise longue, to tell me of his experiences in Italian prisons and a Gestapo jail in Berlin.

Mike Buckley was brought to the hotel in a few days and our departure was fixed for May 13. Shortly before a tourist bus collected us at the hotel to take us to the train Padre Woolf was delivered to us.

The story of the clergyman's release may serve as an example of Fascist justice. It was arranged by the Italian authorities in advance that he would be tried on Monday and sentenced to thirty years' imprisonment. On Tuesday he would be pardoned by the king, and on Wednesday he would be released. The trial was held on Monday and the sentence was imposed, although defense attorneys insisted on the Padre's innocence before the Special Tribunal. The young Italian officer of the letter was sentenced to thirty years' imprison-

ment, without the benefit of clemency. The other officer was sentenced to three months' imprisonment and released, since the sentence was made retroactive. On Tuesday, Woolf was pardoned by the king. And Wednesday morning he was brought to the hotel for the departure.

The special train that was to carry us across Unoccupied France and Spain to Lisbon left from the ordinarily unused Ostiense station, where no Italians could see our departure. As I passed through the gate to board the train Commendatore Aguesci, who had arrested me in December, smiled a farewell and shook my hand.

XXV

The American Fifth Column

One dull afternoon in Siena, for a momentary lack of companionship from the other correspondents who were at the cinema or napping in their rooms, I went to a café to practice billiard shots.

While I was leaning over the table, trying various angles, I noticed that a middle-aged Italian of nondescript and provincial appearance was watching my endeavors. After I had missed a certain shot he could bear it no longer.

"You know," he said, with a strong Tuscan accent, "if you had done it so-and-so, you would have succeeded."

"Thank you," I replied. "You undoubtedly are right. Would you give me the pleasure of playing a game?"

The stranger accepted with alacrity and we played a game of billiards, which I won. We played another, which he won. As the loser, I offered him a drink. He took a glass of wine. We had used up the scrap of paper on which we marked the score and I asked the woman who ran the café for another piece of paper.

"In your language, you say papier, don't you?" my companion said, pronouncing the word as though it were *papeer*. I realized that he thought I was a German.

"No," I replied, "my language is English and we say 'paper.'"

The Italian lifted his glass, with a bow, and said, "Chin-chin."

And we played another game, with the Italian aware that he was playing, in front of other Italians in the café, with

someone whose mother tongue was English, while his country was at war with the whole English-speaking world.

In Rome a detective assigned to guard me appeared one morning sleepy-eyed with a package wrapped in a newspaper. He volunteered the information that he got up early to go into the country to buy some bootleg eggs. He handed me the package and said, "Here are six for you." I thanked him and proffered him the bootleg price, which was fairly stable at four lire an egg. He refused the money and seemed hurt that I had misinterpreted his gesture.

Our last night in Rome a few of us went to a restaurant in disregard of the regulation that we eat in our hotel room. An unprotesting detective trailed along with us. The restaurant, which shall be nameless, was one that I had patronized for nearly four years, partly because of the music it provided. The restaurant was not only full of customers, but people were standing around the occupied tables waiting to claim them. The Germans, as usual, outnumbered the Italians.

I asked for the headwaiter and was told he was in the kitchen. I went there and found this dignitary, who usually never held anything in his hand but a menu card, intent on mixing a salad.

"We would like a table," I said in Italian. Without looking up, the headwaiter said, "Can't you see I'm busy and the restaurant is full, and besides we have nothing left to serve."

I changed to English. "But we are a few Americans who are leaving tomorrow, and this may be the last time we can eat with you."

He looked up for the first time and wiped his hands. "Oh, it's you," he said. "I thought you were a German. Why, of course, I'll find you a table. Come with me."

The headwaiter whipped out his pad and scribbled a check, which he placed on a plate. He stepped to a table in his best ambassadorial manner and, with a flourish, presented the bill. In Italy one may stay in a restaurant until closing time with-

out ever receiving the check unless one asks for it. There were three or four men in the party at the table and each, presumably, thought one of the others had asked for the check. One of them lost the fumble and paid the bill, whereupon the headwaiter hastened the departure by starting to brush the tablecloth.

An Italian, who had been waiting for the table for his party, rushed up. "This table is taken," the headwaiter said. "But I've been waiting for it," said the Italian. "I'm sorry, it was reserved," the headwaiter explained. "By whom?" asked the Italian. "By me, Signor Massock," I interjected. The Italian looked at me, apparently mistook my accent and name for those of a German, and backed away with bad grace.

The headwaiter asked us to leave the dinner to him, because the food supply was really almost exhausted. The detective, meanwhile, had taken a seat in a corner near the table. "Look here," I said, "it is very conspicuous that you are a police agent guarding us. We are not supposed to be here, but neither are you."

The detective replied in the Italian equivalent of "you have something there," and said not to mind him, he would take care of himself. I told the headwaiter to provide the detective with dinner and a bottle of wine, and the detective disappeared.

We were served a poor dinner, with apologies of the headwaiter, but the wine, as usual, was excellent and the Neapolitan music delightful. Eleven o'clock, the compulsory closing hour, came too soon. Everybody paid his check and the crowd started to troop out of the restaurant.

In paying the bill I noticed that no extra dinner or bottle of wine was charged on it. I asked the headwaiter about it. He said the detective said he had already had dinner. He had refused, then, to take the cash equivalent of the dinner and wine. I looked for the detective and he was nowhere to be seen.

As we joined the procession leaving the restaurant I sud-

denly felt two hands clasp my shoulders and a kiss planted on each cheek, while a voice said, in Italian, "Good-bye! My greetings to President Roosevelt." I was startled out of my wits for a moment, mostly by fear, for I wanted nothing to interfere with my departure from Rome the next day. I glanced at my embracer and saw that he was an Italian with whom I was only casually acquainted, who had probably forgotten my name and knew only that I was an American correspondent he had once met.

We proceeded posthaste out of the restaurant, my companions in advance. The detective had waited for us outside the door. We had ordered two horse-drawn cabs, no taxis being allowed on the streets after ten o'clock, except when assigned by the police. Somebody else had ordered a cab and there were three. In the pitch dark of the moonless blackout, I could not see into which carriages the others had entered. As I stepped into one I shouted in English to my companions. I heard a voice behind me say, in the most venomous tone, "Lui é tedesco, he is a German." I took my foot from the step and answered, in Italian, "I am not a German." "Scusi," the voice excused itself. Obviously some Italian, unfamiliar with any language but his own, had assumed that my shout to the other Americans was in German, and, like people who speak no language but their own, thought his remark would not be understood.

At that point a faintly discernible couple approached and the girl's voice said, in English with an Italian accent, "I believe your friends are in the other carriages."

"Is this your carriage?" I asked.

"Yes, thank you," she said.

"Prego," I said, as I stepped aside.

"Good-night," the girl said, and her voice trilled.

From those and other Italians, acquaintances and strangers, even our police guards, all of us learned that among all classes of the population there was a striking absence of enmity toward the United States or toward Americans in Italy. We had

become only nominal enemies, or friendly enemies, if that was not too strong a term.

War with the United States was distinctly unpopular. It was significant that there had not been a single, even officially organized, anti-American demonstration in Rome, or, in so far as known, elsewhere in Italy, after December 11.

The Nazi-controlled press had continued its tirades against "Anglo-Saxon Judo-democratic-plutocracy." But the public was inured to Fascist propaganda from long injections of it.

The widespread anti-German sentiment was only intensified. The German contempt for the Italians had much to do with it. The Italians detested the ally and had affection for the enemy. Millions of Italians had relatives or friends in America, and many had been there. There was scarcely an Italian family that did not know somebody in the United States. It was still the great desire of thousands to go there, and they had been prevented only by our immigration restrictions and the refusal of Italian passports for emigration.

As for the Japanese, some Italians admired their quick and far-flung successes in the southwestern Pacific, but they and others were soon apprehensive of the Yellow Peril that Mussolini denounced in 1934. With a vague racial reaction toward what they considered barbarians coming out of the east, they feared that Hitler and Mussolini, like Aladdins, had called up evil genii whose powers were unpredictable.

In Russia the Italians had done nothing but hold territory conquered by the Germans, so that their only boast was in this May 3 headline from *Il Messaggero* of Rome: "We have not lost a single meter of ground."

Most of the Italian fighting was in the supposedly conquered Balkans. Bands of patriotic Serbs, Slovenes, and Montenegrins were waging a constant guerrilla warfare in the mountains occupied by the Italians on the eastern shore of the Adriatic. April's casualty figures showed the Italians lost 426 men killed and 508 wounded there, compared with 65 dead and 446 wounded in Russia, 186 killed and 110 wounded

in North Africa. And the official figures were only a partial count of the real casualties. Competent observers estimated that Italy had lost at least fifty thousand dead in the war.

Many of the Italian youth, young men reared, some of them from birth, under Fascism, sought to evade military service. Two teachers of a school at Rovigo were expelled from the Fascist party and nineteen students were suspended from membership in the party organizations because of false documents through which they had tried to avoid conscription. All of them were then imprisoned to await trial before the Special Tribunal.

Hitler had kept Italy from gaining anything from France, and even the Fascists were bitter. They could not blame Hitler, so the press vented its feelings on France. *La Nazione* of Florence characterized the Riom trial of Daladier and others, accused of the French defeat, as "a typical democratic farce, a false grand guignol staged to deceive Europe."

The Italian army was still unequipped for a continental war, not to mention a world war. Siena is a garrison city of the Bersaglieri. There we saw fresh conscripts drilling in cotton uniforms around the old Lizza fortress in midwinter snow, and a tank corps training at the outskirts of the city with a single, broken-down light tank.

The navy could not go out to sea to do battle against the British convoys, but had to leave the job to the air force because there was not enough fuel oil or materials for repairs, and Mussolini wanted to keep his fleet intact, for he could not replace it. Experts said the only menace to the United States was the possible inroads that could be made on shipping by the Italian long-range submarines operating in the Atlantic from a base on the German-occupied French coast, probably at Bordeaux.

The war's toll among the Italian cruisers was particularly heavy. Of the seven heavy cruisers with which Italy started the war, all but two were said to have been sunk. Of the twelve light cruisers, only a few were left in operating con-

dition. The submarine strength in the spring was estimated at scarcely half the approximately 115 underwater craft at the outset of the war. Only a few submarines a month, probably less than five, were being built in Italy with steel from Germany. German submarines were operating in the Mediterranean to make up for the Italian deficiencies.

The shortage of Italian destroyers allowed British submarines to take a heavy toll of supply and troopships in convoys between Italy and North Africa. Chief defect of the Italian navy was its failure really to co-operate with the air force. Most naval actions in the Mediterranean were between British warships on one side and Italian planes—bombers and torpedo-launchers—on the other. In one battle the Italian warships did go a short way out, then reported bad weather and returned without getting near the British, leaving the attack to the aircraft.

The air force did considerable damage to the British Fleet, particularly the planes that dropped torpedoes. But the air force in general was ill-equipped. It was estimated to have lost more than half of the possibly six thousand planes with which it began the war. The aircraft factories were working at top speed, with German materials, not to build their monthly capacity of nine hundred planes for Italy, but to provide engines and spare parts which were assembled in Germany.

Probably the majority of Italians were unaware of the deficiencies that were causing them to lose the war, regardless of who won. But they were not all ignorant of what was going on, even abroad. They took chances to listen to the British broadcasts, even after the penalties were increased to as much as three years in prison and a fine of forty thousand lire, with the law precluding suspended sentences.

By the spring of 1942, Fascism had ruined itself.

There had been a considerable effort to increase the effi-

ciency of the national machine, but this was defeated by the excessive centralization and the placing in office of incompetent, if not always dishonest, adventurers. The corporations, or guilds, which might have been a model for other nations to copy, were openly political instruments, presided over by politicians. Political orthodoxy counted for everything.

The standard of living was sinking to a level almost without precedent, even in the days when Italy was shipping ditch-diggers to America. The social insurance funds which were a bright promise that might have merited some of the social oppression of Fascism were dissipated in the war.

There was no free speech, no free writing, no free association, no free industry. All was sacrificed to the material interests of a political party. The retail shopkeeper had to obtain a Fascist license. No doctor, lawyer, teacher, or journalist could practice without the enrollment of his name by a special Fascist committee, after it looked into his conduct to see if it was politically irreproachable. The press was purely Fascist, with the editors actually appointed and removed by the Ministry of Popular Culture.

I lived among Italians, and saw what it did to them.

It embittered them and made them a cynical race that would welcome foreign deliverance, but was too disheartened to do anything about it except complain among themselves and to the democratic foreigners they could trust. They knew how the propaganda was systematically falsified, and came to me, before Pearl Harbor, to learn what the real score was after, for example, a naval battle in the Mediterranean. They were disappointed that I, too, was so cut off by the wall of Fascist censorship that I could not tell them.

There were some old-fashioned Italians who were alarmed when their children came home from school full of Fascist propaganda. I have an example of it before me. It is a five-cent exercise book. On its cover is a colored picture of a dive-bomber, which has let loose a flaming charge of explosives on

the deck of a battleship. The picture is entitled, "Times of Mussolini." On the back cover, under the title *Dux*, is the following:

"In the recent war one can say that the air arm was the essential factor of our victories. Swift, terrible, accurate, it smashed every enemy resistance, annihilated the strongest enemy bases, broke up and wrecked every defensive fortification. But those who piloted the perfect machines were marvelous men; men daring and calm in the face of the greatest risks; men whom only the creed of Mussolini was able to educate and guide in the decisive moment. Thus the great Mediterranean, the sea of Rome and of Italy, was (*fu*) liberated forever from the absurd English domination; and now it sees our ships safely resume their course toward new goals, toward shores that again know the immortal aspect and teaching of Rome."

The "recent war" in which this great Italian victory over Great Britain was achieved is the war that Mussolini declared in 1940.

But the parents had observed that the young men of Italy, once they reached the university age, were as disillusioned with Fascism as their elders.

Some did, of course, emerge as Fascists; for instance, the 27-year-old Aldo Vidussoni, who was appointed secretary of the party in December, when Mussolini removed Serena and sent him to the war zone, wherever that was, as a "volunteer." Yet the Italians said, and it may have been only malicious gossip, that the Duce gave the job to Vidussoni for having taken a mistress off the Duce's hands. Vidussoni's other qualification for the party post, second only to Mussolini's, is that he was a wounded veteran of the Spanish war, who had interrupted his study of law to fight for Fascism. The party secretary of Siena was removed shortly afterward and it was whispered in the bars that he had resented the new choice of the Duce for his number one yes man.

With such stories as that prevalent in Italy it was no wonder Mussolini lost his glamor. He was not completely unaware of the public reaction. In an Aviation Day speech, March 28, he let his ill temper show in a denunciation of the "groups of bastards" in Italy "incapable of feeling the grandeur of this unique moment in human history."

In its second decade Fascism had softened and the cudgel was laid away with the castor oil bottle as trophies of political victory. With the rising tide of defeatism, however, and under the compulsion of the Gestapo, the jails in every town and city of Italy were filled with those who had spoken against the regime within the hearing of an OVRA spy. Many of the prisoners were students. The Fascist disciplinary commissions worked overtime sending Italians to confinement in the prisons or in the hill towns. Some were sent away only because they had American friends.

While wartime privation and suffering were felt less intensely in Italy than in the conquered countries of Europe, their specters were sensed in many a home.

We were able to follow the depletion of Italian economy in the newspapers. The papers, incidentally, for lack of newsprint, were cut to four pages daily, excepting two days a week when they could publish six pages. In peacetime the larger papers ran to eight, ten, and even twelve pages, although, as in France, they were always small. Nothing was lost in the content by the reduction.

In October, when Funk was in Rome, it became evident that Italy was not receiving a sufficient supply of coal from Germany and that, on the other hand, the Germans were becoming concerned over the increased prices which Italian exporters were charging for their products. As a result of the negotiations Germany engaged to increase its coal shipments slightly above the million tons a month promised in 1940. Italy agreed to peg the price of goods exported to Germany.

While Germany's original commitments to supply Italy's

coal needs were nearly fulfilled for the first six months of 1941, transportation difficulties, aggravated by the diversion of cars to supply the German armies in the Russian campaign, led to a falling off in the late summer months. A coal shortage consequently existed throughout the winter. It was acutely felt by the public, for the consumption of coal for heating purposes was allowed only in the measure of 30 per cent of the quota for the corresponding season of the previous year, when wartime restrictions already were in effect.

As a result the houses of the Rome district were heated only in the morning and only for the brief period of ninety days. In Siena, as in Rome, the opera house and cinemas were completely unheated, although there were thirteen days when snow lay on the city. The hotel was heated for a few hours in the morning and again in the late afternoon. A bootleg electric stove warmed our clubroom.

It was forbidden to use electricity for heating because an exceptional shortage of electric power—arising from a deficiency in the autumn rainfall—was crippling industry. The situation became so severe that the government was obliged to curtail the industrial consumption of current by 20 per cent and later by 35 per cent, relaxing this restriction to 20 per cent again in March.

In the meantime the food problem had become constantly more pressing, reaching a point in January where it was found necessary to take control out of the hands of the party and effect a basic revision of the distribution system. This was accomplished by creating a new central staff for co-ordinating control, comprising all the leading governmental ministers and—as an indication of the gravity of the situation—presided over by Mussolini in person.

In this Mussolini tacitly confessed, whether he wished to do so or not, that Fascism was a failure in the political regulation of the people's life. The party botched its supervision over the food supplies so badly that the Duce eliminated its

activities in this field. As a concession to his totalitarian principles Mussolini reserved a place on the committee for the secretary of the party, but the party lost the policing functions which it had been exercising through its provincial units. The execution of the new committee's decisions was assigned to the prefects, the equivalent of governors, of the respective provinces.

One of the first acts of the new co-ordinating committee was to attempt the elimination of the overlapping of services in the individual provinces for the distribution of rationed necessities. Thus the distributing functions of three different prewar organizations originally created for the collective purchase of supplies were assigned in each province to new "Offices of Distribution" constituted for the purpose by the various provincial merchants' unions, counted upon to contribute the practical benefits of their specialized merchandising experience. The distribution office acted as a liaison between the wholesaler and the retailer, informing the latter of the quantity of a product monthly allocated to him under the general rationing plan and directing him to the wholesaler able to supply him. Special attention was directed to organizing services of transportation.

Despite this effort on the part of the government food difficulties became still worse in March. While the shortage had been in evidence throughout practically the entire list of foodstuffs, so that the shelves of the merchants in Siena were pitifully bare, its seriousness was most forcibly brought home to the public by a further and drastic curtailment in the distribution of bread.

Sparing as they were, the initial rations had proved to be too generous to be maintained in the face of grain deliveries by farmers who were withholding their grain from the government's compulsory collection service. No solution was left to the authorities but to spread still thinner the available supplies over the few months remaining before the new har-

vest. This was done by making a 25 per cent cut in the basic ration, the supplementary allowances remaining unchanged. The basic ration of the general public thus became 150 grams (5.28 ounces) of bread a day, or three small rolls, which was stepped up to a total of 450 grams (slightly less than a pound) for persons engaged in extra heavy work.

Setting forth that Italy's wheat requirements range from 8,800,000 to 9,000,000 metric tons, the new minister of agriculture, Pareschi, declared that as a result of unfavorable weather conditions the 1941 crop was reduced to the mediocre figure of 7,104,270 metric tons. (Tassinari had resigned "for reasons of health.") The minister's announcement was an admission that agricultural self-sufficiency was unattainable without the co-operation of Nature.

Pareschi pointed out that even in years of good crops it was always necessary to import certain quantities of wheat from abroad, but that such importations in 1941 were of minimum proportions because of the smaller-than-expected crops in the Balkan countries—the only supplying region accessible to Italy. At the same time the national requirements were increased by reservations for the army, while it was also necessary to ship certain amounts to occupied territories, including fifty thousand tons to starving Greece. This was the first admission to the stinted Italian public of this effect on the home food supply of the aggression against Greece.

Aside from the damaging weather conditions the 1941 crops had to contend with decreasing stocks of fertilizers and with a shortage in the farm labor supply, the latter resulting partly from the removal of considerable numbers of farm workers to Germany.

The report of the Montecatini company, which had a payroll of 81,000 persons and constituted the dominating works in the Italian chemical industry, showed the deficiency of electric current and coal, as well as transportation difficulties, and the shortage of raw materials forced the reduction in the consumption of chemical fertilizers.

Toward the end of March the evidences of steadily growing inflation had become so prominent that Mussolini was constrained to issue a widely heralded warning on the subject. He said:

"It is time to affirm, or reaffirm, that the policy of progressively, and hence indefinitely, increasing prices and the accompanying speculation create a vicious circle, the final result of which, as is incontestably demonstrated by tragic experience both ancient and modern, has a name—inflation—with the concomitant progressive, unarrestable abasement of the currency, savings, wages, and salaries.

"The regime wishes to prevent this and it will prevent it, for it has the means and a decisive and immovable will to do so. It is a matter of safeguarding the national savings.

"To Italian savers, it must be proclaimed—shouted—that the vertiginous increase of monetary symbols provokes fatally —I say, fatally—the volatilization, the pulverization, the total annihilation of their sweat-earned savings, which almost always represent the persistent labor of entire generations.

"The defense (of these savings) shall be effected—with good means if possible, *with force if necessary*—in order at any cost to prevent first the abasement of the currency and finally its complete annihilation." The italics are mine.

Count Thaon di Revel, in announcing the budgets for 1942–43, discontinued his former practice of summing up governmental expenditures to date and forecasting the probable total for the current year as a whole. But a conservative and highly qualified financial expert estimated the enormous expenditures for prosecuting the war were plunging the country into debt at a rate of not less than 120,000,000,000 lire, or nominally $6,000,000,000, a year. This debt was over and above the some 35,000,000,000 lire derived from ordinary revenues, pointing to the significant fact that the government's total outlay substantially exceeded the total national income.

The annual rate of the war debt's rise was figured on the basis of the Finance Ministry's own budget requirement of

13,883,000,000 lire for charges on the public debt, an increase of 3,890,000,000 lire over the interest charge for 1941–42.

The public indebtedness had approached, if it did not exceed, the 400,000,000,000 lire mark, a doubling of the total in only two years of war. On the basis of a 45,000,000 population, this represented a per capita debt of some 8,900 lire. At the nominal rate of 19 lire to the dollar, this would mean a debt of some $468 per person, a tremendous sum for Italy.

Italy's war arsenal, in the shape of its industrial companies, was engaged to the extreme limit permitted by the availability of materials and power. Payrolls were commensurately broad, while money distributed in the form of dividends appeared to have held up to a fairly high level.

Sharply contrasted with the abundance of funds was the scarcity of goods of all kinds, and although the government exerted special efforts to drain off the excess purchasing power by pressing the sale of national bonds, the spring witnessed a further broad upsweep of practically all prices except those of the relatively few pegged articles of primary consumption. My economist friend said:

"When you consider that, regardless of price control, many people are glad to pay such prices as 18 cents for an egg, $6.80 for a pound of chocolate candy, up to $25 for a pound of tea, or even the less startling prices of 45 cents for a pound of lard, $1.05 for a pound of chicken, $1.02 for a pound of almonds; when you also note that, despite drastic taxation and price increases registered practically every week, the rush to buy real estate has been so strong that newspapers have been ordered to discontinue to advertise offerings; when you consider stock averages holding, even after a puncturing of the latest boom, at levels currently 65 per cent above those existing in September, 1939; and when finally you observe the wide efforts of all classes of people to exchange money for almost any form of tangible property, you can no longer say that inflation is merely on the way. It has already arrived."

It was after this that Mussolini delivered another speech in which he denounced the purchases by "hysterical defeatists of a miscellany of incongruous articles ranging from every kind of vase to old incrustations of unknown whitewashers." His reference to the rush to buy antiques was paralleled by an attack in his *Popolo d'Italia* on the "frenzy" of real-estate purchases.

XXVI

After Mussolini . . . ?

If Italians are disillusioned with Fascism, are tired of war, hungry and oppressed, if they hate Mussolini, a friend asked me, why do they not rise and overthrow their detested regime in a popular revolt and sue for a separate peace?

Under ordinary circumstances the Italians would have been ripe for rebellion when we left Italy. But the circumstances were extraordinary. The Germans controlled the country.

There are more complications to Italy's situation than that alone. I have tried to be an unbiased observer, reporting the actual situation as I saw it. I have no personal interest in what happens to Italy, in the form of government it may eventually adopt. With that in mind I shall try to analyze the situation and leave the solution to others. There are too many non-experts already, not all of them selfish, who are giving the leaders of the world their gratuitous advice.

I believe that the majority of Italians would like a restoration of parliamentary self-government, as in the democracies, as the only system capable of giving them decent leadership and economic well-being. How to attain that desire is their problem.

Mussolini, as a Socialist, wrote in 1911, "The masses will not fight." By that he meant the easygoing Italians possess little civic courage. That is one factor in the situation.

Another factor is the force that Fascism has employed from its very birth.

"I want to govern with the full consent of the people," Mussolini once said, "but until this consent declares itself,

I keep the maximum force at my disposal. Perhaps it may happen that force may make this consent come and in any case there is force if consent fails."

It is hard to conceive of a government with less consent than Mussolini's. So there is still force. It lies in the Fascist militia, whose motto is, "Believe, Obey, Fight." The Grand Council said, "The militia is a great political police. Its task, with or without the co-operation of the ordinary police forces, is that of rendering impossible any disturbance of the public order, any gesture or attempt at sedition against the Fascist government."

The militia is composed of the most carefully selected party members, recruited from volunteers coming from the Young Fascists at the age of 20. They are chosen because they are reliable fighters, physically fit, unquestioning, hero-worshiping enthusiasts. Some of the older militiamen, of tested political and combative reliability, veterans of Ethiopia and Spain, have been organized into M battalions, the symbol representing the first letter in Mussolini's name. Mussolini might possibly be able to muster 300,000 men with rifles and machine guns to defend his regime. The unarmed populace, if it rebelled, would have to overpower this militia.

With the tide of anti-Fascism rising as it has risen it is not inconceivable that the public, given the right circumstances, could override the militia.

But the Italians have subsided into apathy and pessimism. They are defeatists in the war. They do not believe they can do anything about it, so they go on praying for peace and grumbling.

They were defeatists before the war, defeatists toward Fascism. For twenty years they suffered and supported Fascism. Mussolini said they were imbued with faith. If that was true the Italian people have lost faith in Mussolini, faith in their king, and as Allen Raymond said, "sometimes it seems as though they have lost faith in themselves, except in the

capacity to work hard, breed, endure hard standards of living, and survive."

One needs only to see the Italians standing at attention in the bars, while the daily war communiqué comes over the radio in solemn, measured, liturgical tones, to appreciate how they have been intimidated by Fascism. They stand because that is the Fascist order. I know a bar where the proprietor turned off the radio just before the war bulletin was read, so that we Americans who were present would not be embarrassed by the regulation. He did that until word reached the party headquarters near by, and then a Fascist officer in uniform took to visiting the bar at the moment of the broadcast to see that the rule was observed.

Furthermore, the anti-Fascist movement in Italy lacks leadership. So long has Mussolini made all the decisions that others have lost the habit of leadership. Italy was in the hands of the Fascist party, which is to say in the hands of Mussolini, before it fell into those of Hitler. And a Roman senator recorded the effect several years ago when he said that as the Duce grew big, the people of Italy grew small.

The regime has done everything to discredit potential leaders, men like Badoglio, who now is old and therefore lacks the fire to kindle the opposition.

Mussolini's dictatorship condemned the masses to twenty years of absenteeism from politics. As a result, maybe the people have been trained to follow any de facto government. If so, where are the leaders for such a government?

We heard of three distinct revolutionary nuclei forming in Italy. There may have been more.

One was supposed to center among the university students. Another was said to exist among the lower ranks of labor, the former Socialists and Communists who for the sake of livelihood crowded into the syndicates and took the name of Fascists, but who felt as they did before, if not more strongly. This was perhaps the real opposition, but it was inarticulate.

There were rumors of a third movement among the Liberals and the Intellectuals. Because each was a whispered opposition, nobody knew how strong it was.

I heard, but could not confirm, of course, that the British Intelligence Service tried to organize a revolutionary movement in Italy when it was certain that Mussolini was going to declare war against Great Britain. The report I heard was one of failure, because reliable, capable leadership could not be found for one movement that would group all the malcontents.

Perhaps the individuality of the Italian was at fault. A French writer, Jean Hussar, attributed the lack of a strong spirit of solidarity among Italians to the individualism which is the outstanding trait in their character, the tendency of each Italian to assert his own personality and escape discipline; to the many parties before Fascism, the domination of Italy by various foreign despots before 1870; the different social conditions, interests, and even dialects of the different provinces. Would the peasant of the South, under democracy, now follow the same leadership as the factory worker of the North?

There is no denying that some organized opposition, even armed opposition, to Fascism exists in Italy. Plots on Mussolini's life as recent as 1939 confirm it. But it has been manifested thus far in sabotage and abortive attempts at terrorism, particularly in the region of the large Slovene population around Trieste.

A series of railroad wrecks and explosions in the munitions factories of Turin, Vulcania, Lecco, Piacenza, and Bologna give rise to a demonstration trial of sixty persons at Trieste in December 1941. Usually such trials before the Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State were held without publicity. But in this case the government apparently intended to make a warning of justice, for the trial was public and the reporting of it filled the columns of the newspapers. Only one

version was reported, that issued by the government, which convicted the men before the court pronounced sentence.

The testimony disclosed what, if true, was the biggest plot in the history of Fascism. The conspirators were charged with a plan to seize power and establish a Soviet regime embracing Yugoslavia. The story that unfolded was one of clandestine newspapers, an insurrectional student movement, a buried store of dynamite, hand grenades, bombs, machine guns, pistols, rifles, and ammunition. One of the defendants, Kaus, confessed that he planned to assassinate Mussolini on his visit to Caporetto in 1938.

While we were interned at Siena, 140 persons, including eighteen women, were tried at Fiume on charges of membership in an armed subversive "Communist" band which had attacked Italian troops. Some of the defendants were shot, others were sentenced to various prison terms. The prefect of Trieste on April 25 ordered a curfew from 9 P.M. to 5 A.M. in more than six townships of his province. The reason was not announced, except that the measure was taken for "the public security." Presumably disorders had occurred, and one report said the prefect had been booed by the audience in a Trieste theater.

But the organized opposition lacks not only the ruthless drive of revolutionary leadership. It lacks organs of opinion, the means to come together in strong numbers. There is no center of agitation, no parliament, no free institutions.

There is no escape for those under suspicion. Doctor Carmine Senise, the chief of the police, has an assistant, Doctor Epifanio Pennetta, whose duty it is to watch for "subversive movements, associations, assemblies, agitation, strikes," to quote from the official Fascist Year Book. Then there is the ever-secret police, the OVRA, and the Gestapo.

The ruffianism of the Fascist bands had nearly disappeared before the war. The war revived it, but up to our departure in May, with little effect. Some defeatists were beaten up at

Trieste and elsewhere. But even the thugs lacked enthusiasm.

The revived persecution of the government's opponents began at Trieste, perhaps, because that city had the largest Jewish population of any in Italy, and the hand of the Gestapo was in control.

Italy's anti-Jewish campaign lagged far behind that of Germany, despite the efforts of the Nazi ally to co-ordinate repressive measures. In almost every country of Nazi-dominated Europe, Jews were treated worse than in Italy. One reason was the small percentage of the population that was Jewish.

The government, in October, 1941, issued some figures on the expulsion of Jews from Italy which were statistical gibberish, as *La Vita Italiana,* the organ of the Jew-baiting Farinacci, promptly complained. As nearly as I could determine, of the 70,000 Jews reported in the government census at the start of the anti-Semitic campaign in 1938, including 57,425 Italian Jews, 17,981 Italian Jews and more than 8,000 of foreign origin had left Italy. That would leave some 44,000 Jews in Italy.

Some Jews were said to be in Italian concentration camps, but they were few compared to those interned in Germany. The suffering of the Jews in Italy had been mainly economic. In the spring of 1942, with the Jews excluded from military service, Mussolini ordered that those between the ages of 18 and 55 be drafted for labor tasks in connection with the war effort. It only meant the inclusion of Jews among the Italians generally whose conscription for work in the factories had been authorized and we assumed it was done at the Germans' suggestion.

Despite the arrests of suspected defeatists, grumblers, and anti-Fascists that filled the jails and confinement areas, Mussolini moved with more caution than Hitler because he knew the tide of opposition might become dangerous under pressure. Since we left Italy there have been reports of a purge of the Fascist party itself in a drive to strengthen the home front,

with thirty thousand members or more removed from the rolls. There were perhaps six million Italians inscribed in the party and its various auxiliary organizations.

The Fascists take an oath which reads, "In the name of God and of Italy, I swear that I will follow the order of the Leader without questioning, that I will serve the cause of the Fascist Revolution with all my powers and if necessary with my blood." For most Italians it is an empty oath, spoken with mental reservations.

The supporters of Fascism form a small minority of the population. They fall into three categories. First are those who are getting rich from high office in the party or from contracts obtained through party membership. They are the most loyal and presumably would defend Mussolini and his regime to the end. Then come the fanatical members, still imbued with the Fascist dream of Empire. The bitter weed of disillusionment may take root eventually among them. Finally are the few who believed the Fascist propaganda that was fed to them for twenty years and whose ranks thin more and more as the months go by.

The Fascist ranks themselves have long been rent by bitter feuds. Every observer in Rome knew that the party had its left and right wings tugging at the center in which Mussolini stood. How strong are the differences, how deep the divisions, I do not know. But the rifts probably would widen at any sign of collapse.

To topple Fascism, one must first remove Mussolini. Many have long believed that Fascism is so built around one man that if the keystone should be removed the whole edifice would crumble, that the regime would crash if Mussolini went.

One often hears that Hitler in the end would commit suicide. In Catholic Italy there are few suicides and Mussolini is not of the suicidal type. He is not yet 60 years old. If his health remains as it is, lamentably good in the eyes of his enemies, if he escapes the assassin's bullet or bomb, will he go

down fighting or, with the wave of defeat lapping at his heels, accept exile as Napoleon did, or flee to it as did the Kaiser in the other World War?

The Italian people hold Mussolini personally responsible for Italy's tragedy. They hate him, and they loathe the Germans, as much as an amiable, industrious, easygoing, peace-loving people are capable of hatred. But that loathing has not yet reached the frenzy of armed revolution.

Nor has hunger yet reached the stage where the gnawing despair of empty stomachs breeds armed defiance. Italy's food resources and faltering economy will probably last out another year, and possibly the next, at the rate of slow decline. The stark famine of Greece is unlikely in Italy and the whole of Italy may never actually starve. But suffering from cold and malnutrition may increase. Perhaps the coming winter will begin to take a toll of death from that cause.

And there is still the military might of modern Germany, which has overawed most Italians and stands ready to crush any rebellion among them.

Without aggressive anti-Fascist leadership among them, without the strength or spirit to rise against Mussolini, the Italians are waiting for the United Nations to depose their despot. Few Italians want to fight the Germans, although some do, some high-ranking officers of the armed forces. This is not to say that the Italians lack physical courage to help eventually in the fight against Fascism. They stood against the Greeks in Albania, although, to borrow the phrase of Wavell, their hearts were in their ersatz boots. They are only waiting for the armed forces of the United Nations to overcome the German forces in Europe.

The generals of the United Nations would probably agree that an Italian revolution now, with all Europe under Nazi domination, direct or indirect, would fail, so strong are the odds against it. And such a premature revolt might be catastrophic for their plans.

Few doubt that with the Italian love for Americans and respect for the British a successful landing of British and American troops on the Continent would hasten the revolution. When they saw a beating administered to a German army weakened by long and costly campaigns, then the Italians could be expected to react.

And that raises the question of an invasion of Italy. With no pretence to the qualifications of a military expert I should think that would be impossible until the Americans and the British had securely occupied North Africa.

As this is written, Lieutenant General Dwight Eisenhower's American troops are landing in Morocco and Algiers. Lieutenant General Bernard L. Montgomery's British Eighth Army has Rommel's *Afrika Korps* on the run back into Libya from Egypt's western desert. It is obvious that this new second front, so long talked about, is intended to squeeze the Axis forces out of North Africa.

It may not be many months before the southern sands of the Mediterranean become the base for invasion of the European continent, the springboard for an offensive on Italy. The American troops may land first in Greece. But the eventual occupation of Italy is a logical expectation. No doubt the Italian army will resist any incursion on Italian soil. But for the Italian people it will be a great deliverance.

As for Mussolini, some believe he is holding in Italy many of the some three million men under arms in order to meet any invasion threat. From the windows of our repatriation special we saw new, half-hidden pillbox fortifications along the Ligurian coast. We could not determine whether they were a defense against invasion there, but since an invasion would come presumably through Sicily and Southern Italy. I should think the fortifications in the North were against commando raids.

The British have made a few such raids on the shores of Sicily and the mainland, none of which has been publicized

except the parachute landing in Catania. I did hear, however, that small, portable radio-transmitting sets of low power were landed for agents to use in communicating with Malta.

The Italians found one such set in a cemetery at Leghorn, near which oil refinery town we saw the fortifications. A Swedish widow, long resident in Italy, visited the tomb of her husband so frequently that the Fascist spies watching her became suspicious. They investigated the tomb one day, and found under its stone covering a radio-transmitting apparatus. The woman was, of course, arrested.

It would seem, therefore, that Americans should first prepare for an invasion by making the Italians believe we are going into the Italian peninsula to help them and to free them from Fascism.

After the armistice where can the Italians look for their leadership?

Mussolini has ruled Italy alone. A law of 1925 exalted him as prime minister to a position high above the other ministers as Head of the Government (Capo del Governo). He is responsible to the king alone, not to any parliament. The Head of the Government, by this law, is to be appointed by the king from a list of names submitted to him by the Grand Council of Fascism.

Mussolini is believed to have prepared for his succession by writing a list of names, with Ciano's among them, and locking it away in his safe against the day when he would be no more. But Mussolini, in his one-man rule, has failed to train an elite, even of Fascism.

And if there is no longer any Grand Council of Fascism to provide the king with nominations, what agency could do it? The army officers who detest the Germans and are hostile to Fascism say they could do it.

The army in Italy has always been loyal and still is loyal to the Crown, rather than to any other power. It is not a long tradition, it is true.

"King of Italy by the Grace of God and the will of the Nation," to quote the Italian almanac, Vittorio Emanuele III inherited his title from his grandfather Vittorio Emanuele II, who was declared King of Italy by the first joint Italian parliament which met in Turin, the capital of Piedmont, in March, 1861.

The royal family itself dates back to the Middle Ages. Its origin was French, and French, not Italian, is the language spoken by the king when he, his tall Montenegrin queen, Crown Prince Umberto, and the Belgian Crown Princess Marie José, dine in family intimacy.

In 1418 the House of Savoy acquired the principality of Piedmont. In 1713 it obtained the island of Sicily, with the title of king. In 1720, Sicily was exchanged for Sardinia. The territory of Genoa was added in 1815. In 1860 annexation to Sardinia and Piedmont was voted by plebiscites in Parma, Modena, Romagna, and Tuscany, by Sicily and Naples and part of the Papal States, which had been conquered by Garibaldi, and by the Marches and Umbria. In 1866, Mantua and Venezia were added to the kingdom. Finally, in 1870, Romé and the rest of the papal states were occupied by an Italian army and annexed to the kingdom by plebiscite, to complete the unification of Italy.

The king and queen live a simple, abstemious life. Since the sanctions of the Ethiopian war they have even dispensed with the customary New Year's Day reception of the Court and the diplomatic corps. The king passes his days with his coin collection and writing in his diary, which some day may explain his role under Fascism and what he thought of it.

The Quirinale, the Royal Palace, has not been violated by the Germans, who leave the king alone except for occasional social activities. But Vittorio Emanuele III is sovereign only by the grace of Adolf Hitler, which means in name alone.

The royal family has taken pains to identify itself with the German alliance. The Japanese ambassador, Zembei Horikiri,

who was educated at Harvard, told John Whitaker and me, with much chuckling, of his embarrassment in conversation with the queen. She spoke with equal fluency English, Italian, and French, but she insisted on speaking German to him, although he told her that he was only able to read a few words of that language, did not speak it, and preferred to talk in English.

Although the king is nearly 73 years old—his birthday is November 11—and he suffers intermittently from rheumatism, he and the queen have done what they consider their duty in the war. This consists of visiting hospitals, charitable organizations, and campaign meetings to raise food, clothing and other things for the soldiers. The king has been unable to visit any active front, as he did in World War I, but only those of the French frontier and Albania after the fighting was over. Only on his birthday and in the Fascist press is he still referred to as the Soldier King. After a reign of more than forty years he and the queen are a quiet, simple, old couple.

It is Umberto, the Prince of Piedmont, and the princess who play the role in this war that their parents played in the First World War. The prince is commander of the armies in Central and Southern Italy and the islands. He busies himself with inspections, reviews, and similar military ceremonies.

Princess Marie José is the most popular of the royal family, the most photographed, usually with her three small children. She is the busiest of all the royal family and, like her husband, is constantly seen in public. There is no hospital in or near Rome and Naples which she has not visited, most of them a number of times. She is inspectress general of the Italian Red Cross, patroness of innumerable organizations and associations connected with the war, including that of the Italo-German Association—though her brother, King Leopold III of the Belgians, was a virtual prisoner of the Germans when she paid a secret visit to Laeken Castle, near Brussels, for his marriage to a commoner in December, 1941.

When we left Rome the Crown was in contempt among many Italians. For one thing, the reverence of the British people for their Crown finds no corresponding sentiment in the Italian mind. The Italian king lost the respect of many of his subjects when he fell so thoroughly under the influence of Mussolini that he was quoted as saying to a gentleman of his court, "Be careful what you say to me, for I must tell everything to Mussolini." And again when he visited the birthplace of Mussolini in 1938 and laid wreaths on the tombs of the Duce's parents.

The Prince of Piedmont, whom I last saw as a tall, handsome, baldish young man in civilian clothes about to board a train for Naples where he has his palace, is a more impressive figure than his father, but has little personality. He once had a quarrel with Fascism, but Mussolini won by amending the Constitution to make the succession to the throne subject to the ratification of the Grand Council. The Fascists also caused a rumor to circulate that the prince was effeminate. Since that time the prince, after sowing the wild oats of youth, has settled down to the role of a respectable husband and father. Like his father he has refrained from joining the Fascist Party, for a king must hold aloof from partisan politics. But in an order of the day to the armies under his command last spring, Umberto concluded with the words, "Hail to the King! Hail to the Duce!"

Have the king's weakness, his subservience to Fascism, and Umberto's conformist attitude, weakened the monarchy to a point where the end of Fascism will mean the beginning of Republicanism? Must the Crown, powerless to resent its own humiliation, passively await its fate?

Although the civil list, or annual grant to the king, is a drain of about one million dollars on the annual budget, I heard no talk of republicanism inside Italy as I have heard of it outside.

There is one school of thought that the monarchy is the

chief bulwark of Italy after Fascism. I heard this expressed by an anti-Fascist who was confined, for a time, for his opposition to the regime. As this man expressed it, the Crown is a symbol of Italy's unity. During normal times the king's political duties are nominal. He merely signs decrees. But in a crisis the king may have important personal power. Mussolini, who acknowledged Republican leanings as late as 1921, recognized this when he endorsed the monarchy before the March on Rome. It was the king's refusal to sign a decree of martial law that made the march so easy.

That, my anti-Fascist acquaintance said, was a demonstration, too, of the army's loyalty to the Crown. It bowed to the king's will. The army and the House of Savoy might still be the salvation of Italy. The king remains as the only symbol of respectability and patriotism in the government. With no Grand Council of Fascism to nominate a prime minister, why could not the army present one to the king? A military dictator, perhaps, but one who would end the reign of Fascism. Furthermore, in the chaos that comes with the collapse of a country in wartime, the army could assume the policing power. How long would it be, he wondered, before the Italians would be politically prepared to elect a president.

That may be a minority view. And would the United Nations accept a military dictatorship?

There are many Italians, even outside of Italy, who hold that the liberation and future system of government of the Italian people is primarily the business of the Italians in Italy. In more than three years among Italians in Italy, I never heard once mentioned the name of a single emigré as a likely deliverer of the people from Fascism. It seemed as though the pre-Fascist parties had been buried so profoundly that not even their ghosts were abroad in the land. The Italians seemed to be searching for new leaders among those who had stayed in Italy and endured the persecution of Fascism. But, as I

have already remarked, I had no contact with the underground, at least so far as I was aware.

In the future of Italy the questions are many. All the country seems to ask is a fair deal, peace, and the opportunity for its sons to work at home and abroad. In the meantime the Italians await a new leader. Will the liberating armies of the United Nations bring him, or will they find him among those they liberate? That, at the moment, is a secondary question. The primary question is how long will the Italians have to wait for the defeat of the German army by those of the United Nations.

A friend, who left Italy after we did, brought this story as the last out of Rome:

Said the Italian optimist, "I think we are going to lose this war."

Replied the Italian pessimist, "Yes, but when?"

That is the question the Americans and the British must answer.

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